

Enrico Fontana

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY SENSEMAKING

THE CHANGE AGENCY OF EXECUTIVES IN BANGLADESH
AND CSR WORKERS IN JAPAN





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The Change Agency of Executives in Bangladesh
and CSR Workers in Japan

Enrico Fontana

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Foreword

This volume is the result of a research project carried out at the Department of Marketing and Strategy at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE).

This volume is submitted as a doctoral thesis at SSE. In keeping with the policies of SSE, the author has been entirely free to conduct and present his research in the manner of his choosing as an expression of his own ideas.

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The PhD process in the social sciences is an intellectual and physical journey unlike many others. As intuitive as it might sound, it is often about continuous thinking, evaluating piles of books, collecting data, being simultaneously euphoric and frustrated over prolonged periods of time. Although being a PhD student can be an extremely rewarding experience, its relational importance is probably under appreciated. In fact, it is also about people you encounter during it and people who have always been there. Although the list of those who contributed to the completion of this PhD thesis can hardly be summarised, some deserve special attention.

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Stockholm, November 7, 2018

Enrico Fontana

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has rapidly become an important organisational practice with which to address social and environmental (societal) challenges (George, Howard-Grenville, Joshi, & Tihanyi, 2016; Margolis & Walsh, 2003). With CSR an increasingly relevant field of empirical inquiry in scholarship (H. Wang, Tong, Takeuchi, & George, 2016), the sensemaking of CSR practices in firms (CSR sensemaking) has emerged as a fundamental theoretical standpoint in the micro-organisational domain (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Glavas, 2016). This stresses the way corporate staff cognitively and socially frame meaning around CSR in a discursive manner (Basu & Palazzo, 2008; Maon, Lindgreen, & Swaen, 2008; Onkila & Siltaoja, 2017; Sonenshein, 2006).

CSR sensemaking owes its importance to numerous factors. It is a point of departure from which to comprehend and forecast organisational behaviour vis-à-vis societal issues (Byrch, Kearins, Milne, & Morgan, 2007). Similarly, it helps discern the way an organisation's members individually navigate through ethical events in their own organisations (Thiel, Bagdasarov, Harkrider, Johnson, & Mumford, 2012). It also explains how they disseminate CSR meaning within their working contexts, with important trickle-up effects for strategic direction in organisations (Athanasopoulou & Selsky, 2015; Cramer, Van Der Heijden, & Jonker, 2006; Richter & Arndt, 2016). In accordance with Basu & Palazzo (2008), studying CSR sensemaking by including the inner motivations of its main protagonists "might provide a more robust conceptual basis, rather than simply analyzing the

content of CSR actions within a certain context or over a certain period of time” (p. 123).

Furthermore, it serves to flesh out and unravel the equivocality attached to CSR by the members of organisations, thereby facilitating its implementation. In fact, the complexity inherent in CSR stems from the value the members of an organisational idiosyncratically assign it (Hahn, Figge, Pinkse, & Preuss, 2010; Hahn, Preuss, Pinkse, & Figge, 2014). This includes, for instance, the tensions emerging from acting vis-à-vis CSR normatively and instrumentally, but also the ambiguity of its newness (Erdogan, Baeuer, & Taylor, 2015; Gao & Bansal, 2013; Maon, Lindgreen, & Swaen, 2008; Mitra & Buzzanell, 2017; Prasad & Elmes, 2005; Tams & Marshall, 2011; Wright & Nyberg, 2012). As such, CSR related complexity is tantamount to an ability to fit the interests of one’s position into an organisation with one’s own moral compass (Angus-Leppan, Benn, & Young, 2010; Athanasopoulou & Selsky, 2015; Sonenshein, 2007). Given the positioned nature of CSR, however, contextual factors (e.g. national or industrial) are key. They significantly determine the ways meaning is framed in the minds of the members of an organisation and are specifically relevant to evidence gathering (Gond, El Akremi, Swaen, & Babu, 2017; Selsky & Parker, 2010). Despite this, CSR sensemaking literature is undermined by three missing foci.

Firstly, it focuses on the framing of CSR meaning in the general employee dimension (e.g. Collier & Esteban, 2007; El Akremi, Gond, Swaen, de Roeck, & Igalens, 2015; Georg & Füßel, 2000; Rupp, Ganapathi, Aguilera, & Williams, 2006; Vlachos, Panagopoulos, & Rapp, 2014). By contrast, the ability to create and broaden CSR practices is more evidently attributed in the literature to specific change agents, such as CSR workers (Mitra & Buzzanell, 2017; Strand, 2014; Wright & Nyberg, 2012) and executives (Hafenbrädl & Waeger, 2017; Schaltenbrand, Foerstl, Azadegan, & Lindeman, 2018). Surprisingly, few more in-depth and fine grained studies of the CSR sensemaking of these two change agents exist.

Secondly, CSR sensemaking studies predominantly focus on Western samples, with specific reference to North America and Europe (e.g. Onkila & Siltaoja, 2017; Richter & Arndt, 2016). This has resulted in a paucity of

empirical evidence from developing countries as well as mature economies in non-Western countries.

Lastly, and in spite of its saliency in explaining organizational behaviour, CSR sensemaking has often been borrowed as a supporting conceptual lens, rather than the object of theoretical contributions (Angus-Leppan, Metcalf, & Benn, 2010; Bagdasarov et al., 2016; Wickert & de Bakker, 2018).

While attempting to overcome the gaps referred to above, this thesis aims to contribute to CSR sensemaking as an organisational theory of inquiry. In particular, it argues for the significance of examining specific change agents rather than whole populations. As change agency in this thesis is considered in relation to CSR practices, change agents here are defined as those individuals who help address societal issues within and outside their organisations. The importance of change agency in this thesis is thus inherently connected to sensemaking. Due to the fact that change agents drive awareness and meaning of CSR practices in their organisations, the way these interpret such CSR practices impacts on the likelihood of their change agency being successful.

This thesis shines a spotlight onto two sets of change agents, in Japan and Bangladesh respectively. The Japanese change agents considered are CSR workers, a specific type of middle manager. The decision to look at CSR workers is substantiated by their apparently important role in crafting and spreading CSR practices vertically in their organisations, at higher but also lower levels, as Tanimoto has explained (2017). Secondly, the change agents scrutinised in Bangladesh are apparel executives who are investing in CSR practices beyond compliance with local regulations and their buyers' codes of conduct. Likewise, the decision to focus on the change agency of executives in Bangladesh is due to their hierarchical social status. They often belong to a narrow group of elite individuals who have reached the apex of government, industry and education, as the literature notes (e.g. Belal, 2001). Bangladeshi executives can generate change not only within their organisations, but, arguably, also in the whole industry and country.

In this vein, two additional remarks are thus important. On one hand, this thesis is not designed to measure the meaning assigned to CSR by the broader milieu of middle managers and executives. As noted above, it fo-

cuses on specific change agents such as those members of an organisation who drive change in society through the adoption of CSR practices. This thesis is thus based on a fundamental assumption that understanding the meaning attributed to CSR by change agents enables organisational behaviour to be forecast and the way an organisation's other members or actors in the industry make sense of it to be understood. On the other hand, this thesis studies the sensemaking of the Western concept of CSR among change agents in Bangladesh and Japan, rather than exploring indigenous meanings of societal contribution. As such, the term CSR for this thesis follows the definition set out by Rasche et al. (2017), which states that:

CSR refers to the integration of an enterprise's social, environmental, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities towards society into its operations, processes, and core business strategy in cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

This voluntary or philanthropic definition goes beyond business organisations' compliance with local regulations or professional codes of conduct.

In sum, this thesis attempts to answer two interrelated research questions.

(1) What drives the change agency of apparel executives in Bangladesh and CSR workers in Japan? And (2) how do apparel executives in Bangladesh and CSR workers in Japan make sense of CSR?

These two research questions are strongly interrelated. Having two research questions rather than one is important because there is an evident causal relationship between the two, with the latter question consequential to the former. The first question seeks to understand the external influences that lead change agents to sensemaking and modify their cognition. The second question refers specifically to the way in which change agents frame the meaning of CSR as a result of external influence more individually.

Once again, it is important to highlight that the definition of CSR adopted throughout the whole thesis and applicable to the research questions is that put forward by Rasche et al. (2017) and cited above.

The importance of scrutinising the change agency of executives in Bangladesh and CSR workers in Japan is substantiated by various arguments.

On the one hand, I am personally attached to and curious about both Japan and Bangladesh and this is what led me to conduct research in these contexts. This particular aspect is explained more in detail at the beginning of this thesis's methodological section. On the other hand, there is a more concrete reason that is informed by scholarly facts, as is briefly summarised below.

Not only does the Bangladeshi apparel industry, second only to China's in size, represent the country economic development engine (Mostafa & Klepper, 2017) but it is also characterised by ongoing worker maltreatment and exploitation (Labowitz & Baumann-Pauly, 2015; Needham, 2015; Sharma, 2015; Siddiqui, 2010). The collapse of the Rana Plaza factory in 2013 contributed to shedding light on the poor health and safety conditions suffered by Bangladeshi apparel workers, attracting worldwide attention and urging the need to support them through CSR (Chowdhury, 2017; Donaghey & Reinecke, 2018). However, Bangladeshi organisations are highly hierarchical and centralised, with decision-making power concentrated in the hands of executives (Mair, Martí, & Ventresca, 2012; Rahim & Alam, 2014; Siddiqui, 2010). Understanding CSR motivations, barriers and enablers at the executive level in the Bangladeshi apparel industry is fundamental to promoting good practices and anticipating challenges (Huq, Stevenson, & Zorzini, 2014). Once again, the decision to narrow down attention in this thesis to one specific industry in Bangladesh rather than a set of different industries is justified by its concentrated societal problems and also its significance. On one hand, the Bangladeshi apparel industry (which includes knitwear, ready-made garments and textiles) is also the nation's largest nation industry in terms of exports. On the other hand, many of the executives working specifically in the apparel sector hold important political rank. As such their CSR decision making has a ripple effect not only through their firms but often through the whole country as well.

Despite their importance, much of the CSR focus in the apparel industry has been on international buyers and the way these vertically pressure and/or inhibit and/or incentivise CSR engagement by local executives in emerging economies (Lund-Thomsen & Lindgreen, 2014; Perry, Wood, & Fernie, 2015). In so doing, the literature on CSR action in the Bangladeshi apparel industry has shallowly assumed that most of its local executives

avoid CSR to act exploitatively, elaborating upon the need for a more regulatory approach (Belal, Cooper, & Khan, 2015; Rahim, 2017). In actual fact, little evidence exists not solely only on executives in Bangladesh in general, but especially on those who act as change agents by voluntarily embracing CSR and the meaning they frame around it.

On a different note, Japanese organisations in general represent an interesting context of scholarly examination for their difficult and much-debated relationship with CSR. While these are among the most active in the world for CSR disclosure through reporting (Kimura & Nishikawa, 2018; Tanimoto, 2017), they have been and remain the focus of international criticism due to scandals and poor societal responsiveness (Husted, 2015; Taka, 1997; Tanimoto, 2013; Wokutch & Shepard, 1999). The decision in this thesis to focus on a broad set of industries rather than a specific one is due to the fact these scandals and issues have taken place across the board. As such, the problem with CSR is assumed not to concern one specific setting, but to be widespread in Japan. Focusing on multiple industries is thus required to understand the root of the challenges but also opportunities posed by CSR in Japan.

More specifically CSR workers in Japan play a widely recognised agency role in enabling and pushing CSR in their companies, making their framing of CSR fundamental to its implementation. Despite a lack of attention accorded to CSR in Asia as a whole (Chapple & Moon, 2005), CSR sensemaking in Japan has been studied at various levels among managers and employees in general (e.g. Bevaqua, 2005; Clegg & Kono, 2002; Kobayashi, Eweje, & Tappin, 2018; O'Shaughnessy, Gedajlovic, & Reinmoeller, 2007; Tokoro, 2007). Nevertheless, analyses of the viewpoint of CSR workers as middle managers in Japan have remained limited (Eweje & Sasaki, 2015; Fukukawa & Teramoto, 2009). In particular, most studies on CSR workers in Japan have centred on the outcomes of their contributions and consequent actions, rather than their personal struggles and the meaning they assign to CSR and societal contribution. Some research, for instance, has stressed the outcome of CSR workers' integration of CSR in Japan, both in Japanese multinational corporations (Tanimoto, 2017) and their subsidiaries (Acquier, Carbone, & Moatti, 2018). Still more recent contributions have observed the outcome of CSR workers' contribution to a specific cause

within their companies in Japan, such as gender diversity, for example (Mun & Jung, 2018). Arguably, the marked consideration of CSR workers' actions rather than the assigned meaning to CSR is problematic.

Posing these questions contributes to the literature and responds to the research gaps cited above in three different ways.

Firstly, it narrows down the broad focus in CSR sensemaking literature in the general employee dimension, detailing and shining a spotlight onto the role of change agents in garnering meaning from CSR practices. In so doing, it highlights the existence of a wide diversity of perspectives among apparently homogeneous change agents, demonstrating their different sensemaking patterns or types. In particular, it shows that change agents are part of horizontal networks of homogeneous peers but also friends, significantly influencing the meaning they attach to CSR practices and their decision making. Although in different ways, this was interestingly the case both for Bangladeshi executives in the apparel industry and CSR workers in Japan.

Secondly, this thesis helps reframe the assumption in sensemaking literature that ambiguous phenomena need to be cognitively unravelled for action to take place and encourage a phenomenon to disseminate. The various change agents interviewed all supported CSR, which justified their change agency. Despite this many could not make sense of CSR and were evidently conflicted about its meaning. On one hand, this highlights the existence of a divide and related tensions between acting in favour of CSR and enacting meaning around it. On the other hand, it shows that CSR rhetoric and sensemaking might not necessarily be directly linked with CSR decision making and dissemination, which again often differs from the individually perceived meaning of CSR.

As such, this thesis counters the assumption in sensemaking literature that meaning drives action, highlighting that action might conversely serve to generate meaning and, perhaps, that CSR action is not necessarily connected with the meaning assigned to it.

Lastly, this thesis's contribution consists of providing empirical evidence on both change agency and CSR sensemaking in Bangladesh and Japan, two non-Western contexts. In so doing, it indicates the way in which contextual and also culturally embedded features more consciously and un-

consciously influence understanding of CSR by change agents, at both group and individual levels.

This thesis is organised as follows. The next section presents a brief section on the ontological and epistemological nature of this thesis. This is followed by a literature review. This theoretical section is made up of one main section on sensemaking and another principal part specifically focusing on the sensemaking of CSR practices in organisations (CSR sensemaking). While doing so, it also highlights the literature on the CSR sensemaking of executives and CSR workers as middle managers. It subsequently explores the Bangladeshi and Japanese contexts, the central areas of the studies developed. Then the thesis sets out its methodology and the way data was collected and analysed in Bangladesh and Japan. The last section presents a summary of the articles and their findings, before spelling out its chief general contribution, implications for practice and limitations.

Chapter 2

A reflection on the ontological and epistemological nature of this thesis

The need for sensemaking is triggered by organisational phenomena that are ambiguous. When attempting to unravel their uncertainties, members of an organisation assign form and meaning to their environment and the phenomena they are trying to disentangle (Weick, 1995; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). This makes sensemaking a “fundamentally social process” (Maitlis, 2005, p. 21).

This section provides a brief account of the constructivist ontology that I have come to embrace throughout my PhD journey. Constructivism is particularly important in that it also explains the methodology applied in this thesis in relation to CSR sensemaking and presented later in section 9.

Constructivism has emerged as the most relevant science philosophy to explaining those organisational domains that appear homogeneous on the outside (Knorr Cetina, 1994). It holds that the ontological truth behind our world is intersubjective. The world is framed as an interpreted realm, where meaning is co-construed and shared through the words and actions of diverse organisational participants (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This renders the organisational reality specific and dynamic, one that is constantly constructed, destructed and updated by those experiencing it (Gioia, 2003). According to Knorr Cetina (1994, p. 3), “meanings and definitions are continuously infused in the respective outcomes and situations”. Nevertheless, this also makes constructivism inherently complex, as participants’ interac-

tional work is constantly on-going and their organisational reality ever changing. Truth is contested, requiring continual renegotiation between an organisation's members before consensus can be reached (Humphreys & Brown, 2002). I would thus argue that constructivists would in all likelihood agree that a fully collective consensus may never be reached, which is also the reason why ambiguity exists and sensemaking is important as a way of unravelling this ambiguity.

Its increasing adoption notwithstanding, constructivism remains a minority paradigm in the social sciences which are often dominated by functionalist and positivist research (Lewis & Grimes, 1999). Van de Ven (2007) and Lincoln & Guba (1989), for instance, place constructivism within the broader category of relativistic and modern philosophies of science. This breaks away from the positivist assumption that scientific knowledge is cumulative, unmediated and a complete representation of reality.

Perhaps, the most important consideration is that objectivity and generalisability are not what constructivism is aiming to achieve as it refrains from imposing prescriptive definitions of how things should be. While distancing itself from critical scholarship, it is concerned with the accounts of those directly embedded in the reality they live, highlighting their voices and whether they are positive or negative about their situations (Latour, 1986). It can thus not be said that all scholars who embrace constructivism adhere to the same paradigmatic conceptions. As Van de Ven (2007) has noted, the inner context of any given paradigm is pluralistic, that is, wide-ranging debates are underway between similar theorists whose standpoints and convictions are, however, heterogeneous. Constructivism encompasses variations too. I believe Czarniawska's (2014) differentiation between realist constructivists and idealist constructivists to be a highly illuminating and well framed account of the differences between constructivist scholars which defines the former as new pragmatics who believe that the world exists independently of human knowledge of it. Their view is, thus, less anthropocentric, leading to the assumption that the earth can exist without people. A constructivist idealist perspective, on the contrary, assumes that reality and human knowledge are the same thing.

If I were to choose I believe that Czarniawska's definition of realist constructivists through new pragmatism would perhaps be the most suita-

ble for this thesis. There are, in fact, a plurality of non-human stakeholders (e.g. the natural environment) who should have a say whatever mainstream humans think of them. This is not to downplay the importance of human construction of the world, which I embrace. It is rather to highlight that human construction of the world is not the sole key. I believe that this also better suits the case of CSR and societal issues in general. Although this thesis does not centre on the environmentalist movement but is broader in societal focus, it stands on pragmatist-realist ground, as Czarniawska put it, to prevent people from “doing whatever they want to do” to the earth (p. 3).

An opportune question to ask at this stage, perhaps, concerns the role of constructivist scientists such as myself. Certainly, our responsibility lies in our understanding of the meaning co-constructed and assigned by our studies’ participants to their realities. In line with the definition of constructivism cited above, however, no objective truth exists. We infer reality from their interpretations, values, interests and viewpoints. This is also why, as methodological section 9 explains later, an organisation cannot be understood without a qualitative analysis of its members’ sense, which is also the main foundation stone of the research questions in this thesis. These are all shared with both the participants of the study and their peers (Van de Ven, 2007). I believe what best explains our role as constructivist scientists is the Latourian (1986) imperative involving looking for performative rather than ostensive definitions of organisations. In line with this, the goal of constructivist research is to seek meaning in how organisations perform, rather than what they look like. This emphasises the schism between ontology and epistemology in the constructivist philosophy. We have been taught that ontology has to do with the nature of a phenomenon while epistemology examines how we know about this phenomenon (Gioia, 2003). Reality is constantly under construction, however, and thus scrutinising its essence is not just irrelevant, it also makes little logical sense. Studying the ontology of constructivism, thus, “offers little promise to organisation studies” (Czarniawska, 2014, p. 5). What is really promising is the study of constructivism as an epistemological programme, that is, the attempt to understand “how” a world is constructed rather than “what” the world is. With specific

reference to sensemaking, Stensaker & Falkenberg (2007) pointed out that what is interesting is not merely understanding sense, but the way different people share and convince each other of their interpretation of the need for change, specifically understood through enacted language. Observations generate facts, but are not reality per se (Astley, 1985). Truth is how participants elaborate, make sense and inject personal meaning into these facts (Gioia, 2003). This contributes to my view that, as constructivist scientists, we cannot understand constructed reality without a continuous and recurring connection with the empirical world and its societal implications. Constructivist research is inherently grounded in empiricism. This, I believe, is a fundamentally important point that also explains my methodological approach in this paper as a whole. Table 1 below provides an explanatory overview of ostensive and performative definitions, as supplied by Czarniawska (2014).

Table 1. Ostensive and performative definitions of organisation

Ostensive definitions	Performative definitions
An organisation is a distinctive unit with properties like those of physical objects (large, small, integrated)	A definition of an organisation arises from social perceptions that change with the context
Actors act in an organisation, which exists independently of their actions	Actors constantly <i>construct</i> an organisation through their actions and their interpretations of what they themselves and the others are doing
Researchers can describe an organisation better than the actors can	Knowledge of an organisation resides in the first place with the actors; observers may have knowledge about an organisation, which does not result from any privileged access to reality
There can be only one correct description of an organisation	There can be many descriptions of the same organisation that can be compared according to the pragmatic or aesthetic criteria
The purpose of research is to formulate principles	The purpose of research is to capture and describe practices

Source: Czarniawska (2014)

Constructivist research is achievable through microanalysis, which involves describing societal episodes through ethnography, discourse analysis or visual methods (Knorr Cetina, 1994). More specifically, this involves the deconstruction of language, signification and meaning, not limited to the contextual, but also encompassing nonverbal and non-human agency. A great deal has, in fact, been written about the societal construction of material practices, such as technology (e.g., Sismondo, 2015). For the purpose of this thesis, however, I will focus on humans alone as they are the sole respondents in my studies.

I would like to conclude this brief section on the ontology and epistemology of my thesis with a brief point on the importance of impact in social science research. As Pettigrew (2001, p. S61) pinpointed, “if the duty of the intellectual in society is to make a difference, the management research community has a long way to go to realize its potential.” That was the case 17 years ago and, arguably, it still is today.

Although, to date, positivist research remains predominant, I am convinced that constructivist research is one of the best approaches where impact is concerned. On one hand, this is because of the face-to-face relationships we constructivist researchers must develop with our respondents and peers. This forces confrontations and discussions at different levels that are not necessarily experienced by positivist scholars and show a connection with what our respondents think and need. On the other hand, it is because of the emic role that we must ensure, namely, delivering a contextual, more in-depth and dynamic view over time. Certainly, I believe that constructivist research is capable of achieving what Pettigrew (2001, p. S67) defines as the goal of “building [a] more porous boundary between science and society” and identifying “multiple stakeholders and how they relate to each other”. On the contrary I believe that impact in the sense of spurring visible change in the world should not be the constant focus of the constructivist researcher, or at least it should not be its sole purpose. While I also believe in acquiring knowledge for its own sake, in my opinion, making our world a better place does not necessarily mean big discoveries or moving the masses. It is very much about long-term and fine-grained learning, very much a matter of personal determination. Although we researchers tend to be overcritical of ourselves and what we are not achieving, I think

we exert an implicit and subtle influence on the world that is often not taken into account.

Chapter 3

A review of the sensemaking literature

Sensemaking is a theory of interpretation (Holt & Cornelissen, 2014) or rather a theoretical perspective in the social sciences. It is directly bound up with the constructivist paradigm and had a major impact on organisational theory (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015). This section presents sensemaking as the main theoretical platform of this thesis.

3.1 Sensemaking in a nutshell

Sensemaking theory first emerged from the study of interaction and communication between the experiences of members of an organisation during their everyday working routines (Garfinkel, 1967). It was later conceptualised as a process designed to assign rational accounts and meaning to those organisational phenomena, events or issues which generate trouble and confusion (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Stensaker & Falkenberg, 2007; Weick, 1979, 2010; Weick et al., 2005). Most phenomena leading to change in an organisational environment are likely to trigger immediate ambiguity. This drives the members of an organisation to enact, select and retain the meaning of these phenomena to overcome meaning uncertainties (Weick, 1979). Sensemaking is about connecting cues and creating an account of what's going on, or what to do (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). As Cornelissen more explicitly defined it (2012, p. 118),

Sensemaking refers to processes of meaning construction whereby people interpret events and issues within and outside of their organisations that are somehow surprising, complex, or confusing to them.

Sensemaking unfolds through cognitive but also inter-subjective social dynamics, developing through the historical, cultural and, perhaps most importantly, linguistic pillars of the members of an organisation (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Bingham & Kahl, 2013; Colville, Brown, & Pye, 2011; Maclean, Harvey, & Chia, 2011; Weick, 2011; Wicks & Freeman, 1998). The latter extract cues from their immediate surroundings (Weick, 1995, p. 43-49) making sensemaking situational and social context specific (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015). On one hand, an organisation's members are bound by the meaning they assign to specific phenomena in that they need to provide a justification for their actions to their peers (Weick, 1995, p. 53). On the other hand, uncertain and unclear organisational phenomena require deconstruction, which is achievable by interfacing with others. According to Sonenshein's (2007) view of the constructivist framing of sensemaking, humans seek social anchors - internally or externally to the company - to broaden their interpretation of equivocal issues, including moulding their understanding of morality and ethics. As social psychologists have highlighted (e.g., Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008; Louis, 1980), humans are unable to fully grasp cues from their external environment on their own. Below, I summarise and distinguish between what I believe to be the four chief features of sensemaking which make it a salient theoretical construct.

(1) Sensemaking is important to organisational change. According to Maitlis & Christianson (2014), accomplishing sensemaking allows perceived causes of uncertainty which disrupt the expectations of an organisation's members to be understood. Consequently, it enables researchers to infer their take on organisational change and predict their respective actions. The resulting meaning can, for instance, lead to greater individual and collective learning (Catino & Patriotta, 2013; Gephart Jr., 1993), while also guiding an organisation's strategic direction (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Sonenshein, 2010). In this vein, the importance of sensemaking is linked to an ability to grasp the

world rationally and ultimately generate change (Maitlis, 2005; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007).

(2) *Sensemaking is process-oriented.* The way organisational phenomena are framed and understood follows an evolutionary process. This standpoint adheres to the social constructionist perspective that elucidates the process by which organisations are created in the their members' minds (Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas, & Van de Ven, 2013). Sensemaking is a process of organising for certain phenomena, driven by members' interaction with each other. It is based on patterns of negotiation and action that have been variously interpreted in the literature. Sandberg & Tsoukas (2015), for instance, distinguish the sensemaking process as stemming from creation, interpretation and enactment of meaning, highlighting the case of activity disruption and reinstatement. Weick (1995, p. 17) discussed the process of sensemaking as including identity construction, retrospection, the enactment of sensible environments, social relationships, continuity and the extraction of cues and plausibility rather than accuracy.

(3) *Sensemaking is dynamic, yet retrospective.* An organisation's members enact meaning by dynamically engaging with intersubjective negotiation activities. To do so, they reinforce their emerging frameworks by collecting cues from the external environment (Weick, 1979). Nevertheless, their actions constitute the same environment they co-create and share. Reality is the consequence of action, and new actions drive a new reality. Thus, the environment itself is dynamic and constantly renewing. Individuals and groups redirect on-going action by re-evaluating their actions (Barton & Sutcliffe, 2009). It is this compounded approach in sensemaking which makes it different from mere interpretation (Weick, 1995). Conversely, sensemaking also entails retrospection. As Weick argued (1995, p. 26), "actions are known only when they have been completed". This forces an organisation's members to rely on their own experiences and perceived past reality (Weick, 1979). In other words, they make sense of phenomena by seeing a pre-existing world on which they have already imposed what they believe (Weick, 1995, p. 15).

(4) *Sensemaking conveys meaning through language.* Over time sensemaking has embraced the importance of language, following a more modernist approach (Colville et al., 2011). As language mirrors meaning, it is the most pervasive symbolic medium (Gioia et al., 1994, p. 364) and allows emerging ideas to disseminate (A. D. Brown, Stacey, & Nandhakumar, 2008; Cunliffe & Coupland, 2011; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015; Weick, 1995). Bourdieu argues (1993, p. 68) that a linguistic market exists and the way humans frame their utterances is attributable to their social skills and legitimacy. An organisation's members influence their environment by communicating their thoughts about change to others, but also they also deconstruct it in their minds through communication from others and interaction (Rouleau, 2005, p. 1415). This fleshes out organisational situations and events through narratives (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Holt & Cornelissen, 2014) leading to the emergence of shared and co-constructed semantics (Hultin & Mähring, 2017).

3.2 Diverse phenomenological categories requiring sensemaking

As mentioned above, sensemaking is primarily a matter of ambiguous and uncertain phenomena which disrupt the status quo, eventually leading to change. I would, however, argue that not all ambiguous phenomena within an organisation trigger sensemaking and interrupt the activities of an organisation's members. Barton & Sutcliffe (2009), on one hand, argue that sensemaking begins in response to specific disruptive phenomena. On the other hand, these need to be voiced and evaluated by an organisation's members. Table 2 and the discussion which follows summarises and distinguishes four specific categories of phenomena from the literature which justify the need for sensemaking. These are: (a) minor planned phenomena; (b) minor unplanned phenomena; (c) major planned phenomena and; (d) major unplanned phenomena. The case of CSR sensemaking, presented later, is most frequently a matter of minor planned phenomena, such as the implementation of a new environmental investment or the sale of CSR practices in an organisation.

Table 2. Different categories of phenomena in the need for sensemaking

Category of phenomena	Description	Example of scholarly work
(a) Minor planned phenomena	Establishment of new organisational functions	Patriotta & Spedale (2009), Sonenshein (2006)
(b) Minor unplanned phenomena	Misunderstanding between players and inopportune action	Barton & Sutcliffe (2009), Bartunek, Huang, & Walsh, (2008)
(c) Major planned phenomena	Major corporate restructuring	Lüscher & Lewis (2008), Stensaker & Falkenberg (2007)
(d) Major unplanned phenomena	Industrial disasters and apocalyptic events	Weick (2010), Gioia (1992)

Source: the author

(a) Minor planned phenomena. These include the implementation of novel tasks and functions that are unknown and unexpected, triggering ambiguity. Patriotta & Spedale (2009), for instance, investigated social interactions between experts working in conflicting organisations. They studied experts' engagement during face-to-face meetings designed to inject meaning into a new organisational task before its collective implementation. Sensemaking's actionability, however, means that even minor and planned events can turn into larger and more unpredictable events. This largely depends on the types of meaning shared by the participants and their subsequent action. Arguably, most CSR initiatives are minor planned phenomena. Despite their increasing institutionalisation, these were long unknown to organisations, generating a need for common meaning (Moon & Orlitzky, 2010). Articles 1, 3 and 4 of this thesis concern the sensemaking of minor planned phenomena.

(b) Minor unexpected phenomena. These are often triggered by the actions of an organisation's members. They happen when these latter fail to notice certain organisational conditions, or act in a counterintuitive manner, indirectly destabilising the status quo (Weick, 1995). This can also be the result of the inability of an organisation's members to tackle sensemaking with minor

and planned phenomena, creating undesirable circumstances within the organisational environment (Barton & Sutcliffe, 2009). This is well exemplified by Bartunek, Huang, & Walsh's (2008) case of unresolved dissatisfaction. An inability to tackle them leads to escalation, higher collective turnover and a need for greater sensemaking effort.

(c) Major planned phenomena – These are larger scale phenomena requiring a concerted effort by all of an organisation's members, often represented by major structural transitions. On one hand, these can, for instance, include generating a less hierarchical and decentralised organisation (Balogun & Johnson, 2004). On the other hand, they can encompass the involvement of specific members of an organisation in major corporate restructuring, such as Lüscher & Lewis' (2008) case of production managers' sensemaking at Lego. Most studies on major planned phenomena centre on actions and meaning elicited by specific members of an organisation. As Stensaker & Falkenberg (2007) noted, it is the interpretative responses of an organisation's members to major planned corporate changes that modify and mediate their implementation. In this thesis, article 2 concerns the sensemaking of a major planned phenomena, that is, the implementation of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) factories as part of CSR from a specific executive perspective.

(d) Major unplanned phenomena. These include major events in a state of emergency, such as the Bhopal disaster described by Weick (2010), the case of the Columbia space shuttle as described by Beck & Plowman (2009) or Gioia's analysis of the Pinto fire. These have received the most attention in the sensemaking literature. The underlying reason for this is that they explain how individuals make sense of unexpected situations requiring them to react in the most immediate and genuine way. It can also be triggered by planned change which disrupts an existing understanding of an organisation's current form (Mantere, Schildt, & Sillince, 2012). On the other hand, these are generally not linked to CSR but rather, perhaps, to the notion of irresponsibility as one which can lead to disasters and a state of crisis.

Chapter 4

The importance of sensemaking to change agency

As we saw above, sensemaking can potentially engender critical organisational change (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007; Weick, 2011). In the literature this organisational change has focused on the corporate milieu (Maitlis, 2005; Weick, 1995), the disruption of order (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014) and collective learning (Gephart, 1993, p. 1470). Nevertheless, change is often the outcome of the efforts of specific member of an organisation to act to make that change, which generates a ripple effect through the organisation. The extent to which meanings are shared and changed varies in accordance with the profile of the members of the organisation under scrutiny (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). This section focuses on briefly introducing two specific segments of an organisation's members who have been studied in sensemaking literature as having change agency. These are mainly executives and middle managers. It is, however, important to highlight that most studies on the change agency of executives and middle managers which has included sensemaking as a theoretical lens have focused in particular on corporate strategic change and empowering organisational performance rather than societal change (Rouleau, 2005). The analysis of executives' and middle managers' (CSR managers) societal change agency through CSR sensemaking, rather than strategic change agency will be explained later in this thesis after CSR and the literature on CSR sensemaking has been introduced.

4.1 Investigating executives in the sensemaking literature

The primary focus of upper echelon analysis scholarship (e.g., Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick & Mason, 1984) has been executives, studied for their relevance and primary responsibility in determining an organisation's strategic direction and plans. In sensemaking literature, too, these have been portrayed as strategic change agents responsible for guiding action and implementing organisational plans (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Through their sensemaking, these latter not only unravel ambiguities with potentially detrimental consequences for their organisations as a whole, but the meaning they attribute to equivocal phenomena also influences the sensemaking of other members of an organisation, too, setting behavioural and cognitive standards. While extracting specific cues from industry discourses, these indirectly steer their organisations and decide whether to embrace change or otherwise (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). Executives' sensemaking processes thus serve not only to embrace a new vision or welcome new initiatives but also "give sense" to specific phenomena in the rest of the organisation, providing a clear forward direction (Nag, Corley, & Gioia, 2007). Sensegiving has been coined as a complementary notion to sensemaking. As Gioia & Chittipeddi have defined it (1991, p. 442) "sensegiving is concerned with the process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organisational reality". Executives' sensegiving function plays a fundamental role in change agency (e.g., Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Gioia, Thomas, Clark, & Chittipeddi, 1994). On one hand, executives' interpretative systems are often paralleled with the way an organisation as a whole thinks of ambiguous phenomena (Gioia et al., 1994). Likewise, assessing their sensemaking provides an indication of information about change and how it will unveil (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). For Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991), change can be viewed as a process whereby executives "make sense of an altered vision of the organisation and engage in cycles of negotiated social construction activities to influence stakeholders and constituents to accept that vision". (p. 434).

4.2 Investigating middle managers in the sensemaking literature

Despite a negative reputation for slowing down rather than accelerating change, middle managers play an important role in the sensemaking literature. Their ability to mediate the sensemaking of top managers and lower level employees often on the frontline, is emphasised. In occupying the middle layers, these exercise strategic change and contribute to moving an organisational mission forward (Balogun, 2003; Balogun & Johnson, 2004). According to Balogun, Bartunek & Do (2015), for instance, they exercise agency by constructing two sets of narratives connecting up wider organisational demands for change at the top to responses from an organisation's frontline members. To do this, middle managers have to gain familiarity with, and navigate through, various sociocultural and hierarchical systems. On one hand, they engage in strategic planning by working with the top layers and selling the need for change. On the other, they have to deal with routine everyday operations (Rouleau & Balogun, 2011). Rouleau's (2005) clothing company case shows middle managers engaging in micro-practices related to the implementation of strategic changes. As such, they act as repositories of knowledge and a network hub, linking up all an organisation's stakeholders. Likewise, they have been studied for their emotional role in organisations. For Huy (2002), middle managers provide the emotional balance potentially required at times of uncertainty and confusion. Similarly to executives, theirs is a sensegiving function in relation to the rest of the organisation, ensuring continuity and change. Although most of the literature on middle managers focuses on minor events, these also play a primary role in understanding major unexpected phenomena. Beck & Plowman's (2009) case of the Columbia space shuttle disaster shows that middle managers' position is unique in that it allows them to foster a richer understanding of exceptional and unusual events, thereby enhancing organisational learning.

Chapter 5

CSR sensemaking

The interest at the heart of this thesis is, however, to study sensemaking with reference to empirical CSR practice at an organisational level. CSR sensemaking is significant because it explains the way various members of an organisation help overcome CSR implementation complexities and ambiguity. In so doing, they frame, present and ultimately foster CSR (Athanasopoulou & Selsky, 2015; Basu & Palazzo, 2008; Sonenshein, 2006), but also add meaning to specific ethical events (Thiel et al., 2012). This scholarly argument departs from sensemaking literature's standard tendency to reinforce corporate strategic direction (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). It helps spell out and forecast an organisation's corporate decision-making processes regarding the CSR agenda (Richter & Arndt, 2016). CSR sensemaking has both individual and social dimensions, designed to create a common and context-bound view of CSR in an organisation (Cramer et al., 2006). Importantly, it acts through an organisation's members' discursive and storytelling accounts of CSR (Onkila & Siltaoja, 2017). The next section of this thesis introduces CSR as a contested organisational practice in scholarship and practice after which it presents the main studies that have adopted CSR sensemaking.

5.1 CSR as ambiguous organisational practice

Our society is undermined by “pervasive, endemic, multi-scalar, interconnected, and evolving” challenges (Selsky & Parker, 2010, p. 21) requiring

concerted organisational level effort. CSR emerged as corporate practice aimed at solving societal challenges and improving human lives both outside and inside an organisation (Erdogan et al., 2015; Ferraro, Etzion, & Gehman, 2015; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Rodell, Booth, Lynch, & Zipay, 2017). It directs companies toward embracing voluntary responsible business practices (Rasche, Waddock, & McIntosh, 2013) inherent in high international standards of stakeholder engagement, offering both a point of orientation as well as a moral compass (Rasche et al., 2017). CSR remains a contested and unclear practice, however, because of its multiple meanings.

In academia, CSR has been defined in various and conflicting ways through the decades (e.g., Dahlsrud, 2008; D. J. Wood, 1991). More specifically, scholars have taken opposing viewpoints concerning its ambiguities with some arguing that developing a specific and unique meaning for CSR is essential to making it actionable (e.g., Cramer, Jonker, & Van Der Heijden, 2004). Others have embraced the importance of maintaining a plurality of CSR views because of the potential for moulding it in to the specific context and grievance under consideration (e.g., Angus-Leppan, Benn, et al., 2010; Weick et al., 2005). In accordance with my constructivist perspective on reality, I will highlight the importance of ensuring a plurality of CSR definitions in this thesis. For ease of analysis, however, I believe it is important to acknowledge one of its most recent and compelling definitions which may be useful to readers new to the CSR concept. This is Rasche et al. (2017)'s definition, which argues that,

CSR refers to the integration of an enterprise's social, environmental, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities towards society into its operations, processes, and core business strategy in cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

The special relevance of this definition consists of its combination of the societal dimension with a more operational and financial element, demanding a balance between the two but also highlighting possible tensions. In my opinion, however, what is most important is the notion of philanthropy. Its inclusion is key because it highlights an organisational engagement that is non-coercive and goes beyond local compliance to regulation. This is a very important element that also emerges throughout my work.

In practice, CSR has been seen as generating paradoxical expectations and perplexity among an organisation's members (Hahn et al., 2014). Current social psychology work, on one hand, indicates that the understanding of an organisation's members of a single practice varies (Jones et al., 2017). This is due to inevitable human cognitive biases and heterogeneous perceptions which provide a customised reflection of actual organisational phenomena (R. Wood & Bandura, 1989). On the other hand, CSR research also explains that those of an organisation's members who do the same job frame CSR in a similar way, inviting a focus on specific professional segments (Maon et al., 2008).

Certainly, organisationally speaking CSR is a jigsaw of meanings in accordance with the opposing levels of an organisation's members but also their own subjective interpretations (Maon et al., 2008; Onkila & Siltaoja, 2017). These meanings convey a complementary, substitutional or conflictual perception of CSR (Crilly, 2013), framed in instrumental and/or moral terms (Gond et al., 2017).

Table 3 presents an informative list of some of the main studies that have explicitly looked at CSR sensemaking. I have differentiated between them in terms of category (cognitive, collective) and focus (e.g., general practitioners, employees, individuals, executives). It is also important to acknowledge that much of the literature uses sensemaking implicitly (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). This means that many studies seek the meaning co-constructed around certain ambiguous phenomena without, however, expressly mentioning sensemaking. This is even more the case of sensemaking and CSR, where the literature remains highly fragmented. For the purpose of this thesis, I will focus my literature review on the two main constructions of CSR sensemaking, its individual (cognitive) and collective approaches, as explained in the next section.

Table 3. Studies of CSR sensemaking in the cognitive and collective dimensions

Approach	Category	Focus	Scholarship	Journal
CSR sensemaking	Cognitive	General practitioners (managers and members)	Collier & Esteban (2007)	Business Ethics: A Europ. Review
			Hockerts (2015)	Business Strategy and the Env.
			Hahn et al. (2014)	Academy of Management Review
			Palazzo, Krings, & Hoffrage (2012)	Journal of Business Ethics
			Richter & Arndt (2016)	Journal of Business Ethics
		Executives	Thiel et al. (2012)	Journal of Business Ethics
			Angus-Leppan, Metcalfe, & Benn (2010)	Journal of Business Ethics
		Individuals (students) Inter-organisational (Review articles)	Bagdasarov et al. (2016)	Journal of Business Ethics
			Selsky & Parker (2010)	Journal of Business Ethics
			Basu & Palazzo (2008)	Academy of Management Review
Collective perspective	Collective perspective	Organisation members (general)	Athanasopoulou & Selsky (2015)	Business & Society
			Georg & Füssel (2000)	Business Strategy and the Env.
			Sonenshein (2009)	Organisation Science
			Basu & Palazzo (2008)	Academy of Management Review
			Onkila & Silttaoja (2017)	Journal of Business Ethics
		Entrepreneurs	Angus-Leppan, Benn, et al. (2010)	Business Strategy and the Env.

Source: the author

5.2 CSR sensemaking from an individual cognitive perspective

A great deal has been written about the cognitive dimension of an organisation's members making sense of CSR. In general, individuals use knowledge structures such as heuristics to facilitate their understanding of phenomena (Walsh, 1995). By engaging in CSR sensemaking, they activate mental structures to attribute meaning and disentangle the equivocality of CSR (Basu & Palazzo, 2008). The meaning attributed to CSR is often influenced individually by a variety of factors, presented in multiple forms in the literature. I have summarised them in two main groups (personality features as well as life history and context) below.

Personality features. These comprise personal attitudes, traits, values and preferences, framed ad hoc in each individual mind. Different personality features shape organisational members' CSR framing (Rupp Mallory 2015) and explain why individuals within the same organisation perceive and interpret CSR practices differently (Jones, Willness, & Heller, 2016). For instance, Maitlis & Lawrence (2007) argued that individuals build perceptions on issues in accordance with the notion of "bounded responsibility", i.e.: they identify an issue concomitantly to whether they perceive it as important to themselves personally or those they represent. Conversely, personality features are influenced by interpretation and clarification of information by an organisation's members (Maitlis, 2005; Panagopoulos, Rapp, & Vlachos, 2016). These shape people's willingness to engage in or even disengage from CSR, dictating their ability and commitment at work. Organisational Behaviour theorists have, for instance, adopted the notion of psychological availability from social psychology. This represents an individual's willingness to engage in an activity or otherwise at a specific moment (Kahn, 1990), helping explain the influence of personality on individual CSR engagement. Moral psychologists have conversely stressed the importance of personal values and care-based concerns in influencing individual CSR awareness and sensemaking (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999). In line with the moral narrative, scholars have highlighted

that the accomplishment of care-based concerns through CSR initiatives leads to psychological gratification and self-esteem among an organisation's members (Rupp et al. 2013), enhancing the fostering of individual goals (Glavas, 2016). Conversely, individual personality traits potentially lead to CSR implementation for instrumental reasons (Rupp, 2011). Reynolds (2006) has discussed utilitarianism and formalism as psychological triggers to CSR awareness. Likewise, the motivation and commitment of an organisation's members' to CSR is influenced by their personal preferences and interests (Byrch et al., 2007) and also their values and goals (Collier & Esteban, 2007). Hockerts (2015) highlighted the instrumental angle of cognition, explaining that an organisation's members build their own cognitive representation of reality by balancing CSR's perceived potential (e.g., efficiency gains, brand building and new market access) with its potential risks. By a similar token, Richter & Arndt, (2016) explained that CSR can depend on the attitude of an organisation's members to stakeholders of, namely how much they care about stakeholders, and which specific stakeholders. They explained that those who become involved in community life may develop a stronger sense of CSR. As a result of commitment, self – reflection has been studied as being significant in channelling cognition. Thiel et al. (2012) highlight that reflecting on positive past experiences can lead to more positive CSR meanings.

Life history and context. Personal life history and past experiences target CSR sensemaking. These include life-course events and occurrences (Kearins & Collins, 2012). As Weick et al. (2005) pointed out, an organisation's members do not start from scratch when they engage in sensemaking. They build on previous experiences that have shaped their way of perceiving the world. For instance, Tams & Marshall (2011) proposed the notion of bibliographical reflexivity to identify the psychological process involved in reflecting on one's current activities, values and career choices on the basis of previous life experiences and decisions. Individuals' life histories alter CSR sensemaking by filtering information. Past experiences influence individuals' psychological attitudes toward making inferences from new information (Walsh, 1995). The life histories of an organisation's members alter CSR sensemaking by filtering information. For instance, past experiences of injustice are likely to modify one's CSR cognitive framing

and the weight assigned to different CSR initiatives (Rupp et al. 2013). Past experiences drive individual psychological meaningfulness, feelings of safety and availability for specific job roles (Kahn, 1990). Weber & Wasieleski (2001), for instance, studied the ways in which individuals build their own moral agency, and the part played by various individual factors (e.g., context, age, gender, type of work and membership) in their involvement.

In a similar vein, one's life history drives the CSR expertise of an organisation's members, that is, their knowledge of social and environmental issues gained through past practices and studies. An organisation's members are more likely to successfully engage in sensemaking in domains in which they have expertise (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). Those who already know a great deal about CSR have already developed schemas that can be assessed more reliably than those of individuals who do not (Walsh, 1995).

In the same way, the specific context in which individuals live and work has an important effect on their cognition as does their understanding of CSR. Palazzo et al. (2012) demonstrated that the members of an organisation either engage in ethical decision making or morally disengage based on activities and context factors. They parallel organisational and situational pressures with institutional pressures, explaining the way these can simultaneously impact on one's understanding of CSR. This is also noted by Collier & Esteban, (2007) and Weber & Wasieleski (2001), who explained how corporate context and organisational culture shape employees' perceptions of CSR and ethics.

Most of the literature on cognitive aspects of CSR focuses on general practitioners and an organisation's members as employees. It is, however, interesting to note that this is slowly changing and the "employee-centric" approach (Rupp, 2011) is slowly turning into a "person-centric" one (Gond et al., 2017; Rupp & Mallory, 2015). In this sense, there is a greater willingness to study other professional functions, which include middle managers and executives.

5.3 CSR sensemaking from a collective perspective

The study of sensemaking in CSR scholarship builds on the idea that meaning is constructed by means of external and socially validated information (Goffman, 1959). In retrieving information, individuals make sense of themselves, and unconsciously assign meaning to their organisations' internal and external environments (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The organisational environment is interpretative and functions as a social context for negotiating the meanings that underpin decisions and actions (Daft & Weick, 1984; Thomas, Shankster, & Mathieu, 1994). It is made up of constituent elements who influence each other's psychological attitudes (Walsh, 1995), making CSR sensemaking an inherently and inevitably social activity (Sonenshein, 2007; Vlachos et al., 2014). As such, CSR meaning is both formulated and validated by an organisation's members prior to implementation (Cramer et al., 2004).

CSR is attributed meaning in line with sources of information retrievable in a company's group dimension, affecting sensemaking through interpersonal interaction (Jones et al., 2016). Because CSR is a corporate phenomenon and people spend most of their time at work, on average, the internal organisational environment is a major driver in CSR understanding (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). CSR sensemaking is articulated, for instance, in line with perceptions of an organisation's current CSR engagement (Hockerts, 2015) and the outcome of this (Rupp, 2011) including how it reactively and proactively deals with social and environmental matters (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007).

According to Kahn (1990), in particular, the extent to which an organisation's members reveal their personalities, views and perceptions varies considerably from organisation to organisation and is affected by feelings of psychological safety, that is, the extent to which they feel at ease with others, without fear of damage to their self-image, status or career. CSR sensemaking thus may be channelled by congruence between widely recognised company norms and personal values (Gond et al., 2017), ultimately altering the perceived importance and pay-off of CSR (Crilly, 2013). Identi-

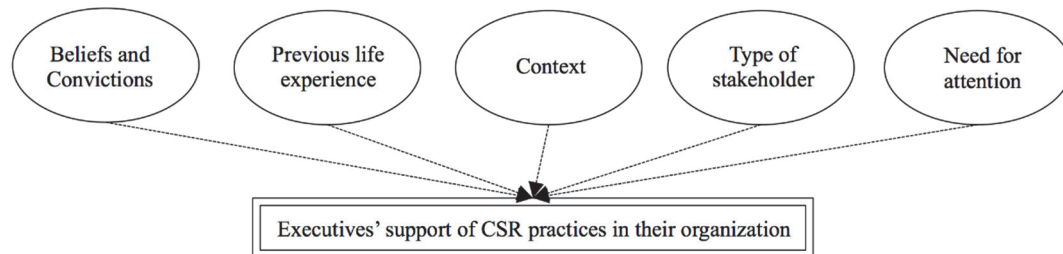
ty scholars have long examined personal vis-à-vis organisational dilemmas (Gunz & Gunz, 2007; Weber & Wasieleski, 2001). As such, the way CSR meaning is aggregately composed ultimately mirrors an organisation's "internal character" (Basu & Palazzo, 2008). Those entrusted with delivering change in an organisation or introducing new phenomena, such as CSR workers, need to make sense of these for themselves before making them available to others (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). In particular, they extend and "sell" the meaning of CSR in order to influence others (Sonenshein, 2006).

Chapter 6

Research on executives' CSR sensemaking with organisations

Much research on executives has drawn from upper echelon perspectives and centred on their behavioural drivers (e.g., Busenbark, Krause, Boivie, & Graffin, 2016; Wowak, Gomez-Mejia, & Steinbach, 2017) and strategic implications (e.g., Geletkanycz & Hambrick, 1997; Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick & Mason, 1984). By contrast, CSR sensemaking studies on executives have remained limited. Some analyses have observed the implications of executive behaviour vis-à-vis CSR implementation. These include responsibility styles based on their perceived moral obligations and their organisations' CSR agendas (Maak, Pless, & Voegtlin, 2016), but also the link between enacted CSR practice and performance (Yuan, Tian, Lu, & Yu, 2017). In this sense, most research on the moral issue and the ethical leadership expected of them has appeared in a collective work edited by Treviño and colleagues (M. E. Brown & Treviño, 2006; M. E. Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005; Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). Likewise, studies bridging the role of the executive with a study of management CSR practices have focused predominantly on executives' personal and cognitive characteristics. Below I have briefly listed five separate categories of drivers summarised from the literature, displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Five drivers of executive support for CSR practices in organisations



Source: the author

Executives' support for CSR has primarily been studied in accordance with their personal beliefs and convictions. Hafenbrädl & Waeger (2017), for instance, explained that certain executives support CSR because they advocate a fair market ideology and believe in its business application. From a different standpoint, Chin, Hambrick, & Treviño, (2013) highlighted the importance played by executives' political ideologies in influencing their support for CSR.

Secondly, several studies have shone a spotlight onto executives' life experiences. One example of this is Luo, Xiang & Zhu's (2017) study of Chinese executives which demonstrated that past military experience influenced their decision to embrace corporate giving in their organisations.

Thirdly, other researchers have scrutinised the role played by executives' location and origin. Galaskiewicz (1997), for instance, showed that executives' corporate giving in the United States is tied to the cities they live in and its customs. Similarly, Butterfield, Treviño, & Weaver (2000), as well as Treviño, Hartman, & Brown (2000), elaborated on the importance of an awareness of moral issues, arguing for its relatedness to socio-contextual variables.

Fourthly, research has scrutinised the type and influence of organisational stakeholders on executives' CSR engagement. In this vein, Agle, Mitchell, & Sonnenfeld (1999) found that executives' perception of stakeholders' power, legitimacy and urgency (based on their previous study

of stakeholder theory in Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997) spurs on or holds back normative values and understanding of stakeholder salience in the United States.

Finally, scholars have analysed the way in which executives support for CSR practices is motivated by a desire to improve their public images. These more recent articles, often part of strategic management literature, link executives' CSR decisions with their inner and more narcissistic ambitions. Both Petrenko, Aime, Ridge, & Hill (2016) and Tang, Mack, & Chen (2018), for instance, see CSR as a personal need for attention by executives rather than an outcome of moral agency. Limited work has been done on executives' CSR sensemaking with a few exceptions. Thiel, Bagdasarov, Harkrider, Johnson, & Mumford (2012), for instance, showed that executives' ethical decision making is influenced by the constraints they cognitively perceive. Similarly, Angus-Leppan, Metcalf, & Benn (2010) focused on executives' CSR sensemaking to highlight the tension between leadership styles. Once again, Byrch, Kearins, Milne, & Morgan (2007) focused on understanding New Zealand's executives promotion of sustainability, business or sustainable business.

Chapter 7

The focus on CSR workers as middle managers

CSR workers represent a specific occupational group endowed with societal agency. As middle managers, they are primarily responsible for authoring, modelling and/or promoting CSR practices designed to benefit society (Risi & Wickert, 2017; Strand, 2014). The CSR workforce has only recently experienced significant growth due to the dissemination and institutionalisation of their work at the organisational level. As Moon & Orlitzky highlighted (2010), this has been possible thanks to greater availability of educational courses on CSR, increasingly offered by public and private institutions worldwide. CSR workers are represented both in the literature and in practice under diverse labels, ranging, for instance, from CSR professionals (Risi & Wickert, 2017) and ethics officers (Izraeli & BarNir, 1998), to sustainability officers (Strand, 2014), sustainability specialists (Wright & Nyberg, 2012) and sustainability practitioners (Mitra & Buzzanell, 2017).

Despite a positive image in society at large due to their societal orientation (Tams & Marshall, 2011; Wickert & de Bakker, 2018; Wright & Nyberg, 2012), the inter-disciplinary work and agency of CSR workers is often considered ambiguous and difficult to explain. While companies allegedly enable their staff to embrace CSR and fulfil personal aspirations beyond productivity targets (Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Wicks & Freeman, 1998), CSR workers are also expected to act on behalf of, and in the interests of, their companies (Gao & Bansal, 2013; Maon et al., 2008; Tams &

Marshall, 2011; Wright & Nyberg, 2012, 2017). As such, they simultaneously encounter contrary and equivocal pressures, heightening the need for CSR sensemaking (Hahn et al., 2014). In their study of New Zealand's leaders, New Byrch, Kearins, Milne, & Morgan (2007), for instance, pinpointed that having both societal and corporate ambitions in actual fact leads to a rift, resulting in conflict within the company. Still, Brés & Gond's (2014) case of CSR consultants discusses the problem of social commodification of CSR work, highlighting the blurred nature of the boundaries between societal and economic engagement. While their dichotomous account is problematic, it also leads to poor legitimacy vis-à-vis other company departments (Prasad & Elmes, 2005; Sonenshein, 2006). This indirectly alters the way CSR workers perceive the value of their work, at times influencing them toward seeking greater economic objectives to improve their status (Mittra & Buzzanell, 2017). According to Risi & Wickert's (2017) study on CSR managers in Germany and Switzerland, not only does embracing a CSR role lead to an inability to advance one's professional career, but it also eventually results in marginalisation.

7.1 CSR workers' company change agency

Specific types of job create different and opposing inter-personal relationships, playing a critical role in shaping individuals' experiences and mindsets (Grant & Parker, 2009). To advance their CSR work in their companies, CSR workers operate in an inherently social manner. Their output does not only rely on cooperation and the solidity of their relationships within their companies (Basu & Palazzo, 2008; Tams & Marshall, 2011; Wickert & de Bakker, 2018). It predominantly hinges on the way the rest of a company's workforce respond to and engage with CSR (Collier & Esteban, 2007). According to Cramer, Van Der Heijden, & Jonker's (2006) framework, change agents such as CSR workers aim to mobilise the interest of other organisational members in favour of CSR. They organise activities and maintain iterative communication with the rest of their colleagues. While doing so, they adapt their language, attempting to channel others' views of CSR and frame a CSR-oriented mindset. This has contributed to sketching out a dynamic image of CSR workers in the literature, which emphasises their abili-

ty to negotiate and transform CSR meaning and sell it to other corporate staff by relying on their interpersonal trust and skills (Collier & Esteban, 2007; Daudigeos, 2013; Wickert & de Bakker, 2018). In order to create engagement, more specifically, scholars have analysed the authority these are granted by senior management (Izraeli & BarNir, 1998), including the latter's propensity to engage in it and the reasons behind their decisions (Hafenbrädl & Waeger, 2017). While most CSR workers operate within organisational perimeters, they are also boundary spanning individuals (Aguilera et al., 2007; Basu & Palazzo, 2008). For instance, they attend social meetings and seminars where they exchange information and learn about their jobs (Weaver, Treviño, & Cochran, 1999). More recently, Risi & Wickert (2017) underscored that CSR workers engage in events and conferences with peers across industries.

7.2 CSR workers' sensemaking and a few critiques

Given the contrasting and complementary attributes discretionarily attached to CSR in organisations, CSR workers identify and manage meaning comprehensively before integrating CSR practices (Maon et al., 2008). As such, they adopt sensemaking to clarify the meaning of CSR prior to implementation, creating, translating and moulding it into language and actions (Cramer et al., 2004; Georg & Füssel, 2000). CSR workers act as agenda-setters, language-creators and moderators. They construct meaning by conflating diverse scopes, personalities, functions, instruments, discussions, thoughts and activities (Cramer et al., 2004).

Nevertheless, CSR's interdisciplinary organisation-society ambition and need for clarification among CSR workers themselves, has added to the need for cross-level coordination in the workplace, triggering considerable scholarly debate. On one hand, a robust research approach has levelled various accusations against companies. Although these are often seen as societal stewards, their use of CSR to favour instrumental and short-term concerns is frequently criticised (Byrch et al., 2007; Gao & Bansal, 2013). Critical scholars have, in particular, accused companies of cultivating an

emancipatory rhetoric and epideictic approach around CSR which actually conceals narrow economic objectives, and pointedly denied CSR's transformational virtues for society (Banerjee, 2008; Levy, 1997). They have studied CSR as an aspirational and discursive method of control, binding employees' identity and ethics to the company (Costas & Kärreman, 2013). This also affects CSR workers, who have been critiqued for the types of communication used. Sonenshein (2006), for instance, has contended that an organisation's members adopt an embellished economic language when discussing societal issues in order to gain legitimacy and attention from superiors.

Chapter 8

The importance of context-based research for CSR sensemaking

Although the scope of this thesis does not encompass the indigenous meanings of societal contribution in different settings, it acknowledges that the sense attributed to CSR cannot be detached from the national, sub-national or industrial context in which it is studied (Gond et al., 2017). The local context is germane because it is constituted embedded rules, codes, stories and rituals that affect sensemaking, directly or indirectly. It influences meaning uptake in the minds of managers, driving the individual CSR understanding of an organisation's members (Millar & Choi, 2009; Selsky & Parker, 2010). Some aspects of the local context are visible and tangible, while others operate unconsciously (Collier & Esteban, 2007). Contextual factors include public norms and awareness of CSR (Kearins & Collins, 2012), depending on local traditions, beliefs and a shared symbolism within a certain collective of players (Frost & Egri, 1991; Ouchi, 1980). The next two sections introduce CSR in Japan and Bangladesh as empirical fields of study.

8.1 Japan as context of scrutiny

Modern Japanese society is rich in socially accepted and collective norms which guide interpersonal relations and understanding of social phenomena (Boardman & Kato, 2003; Dollinger, 1988; Lin & Yamaguchi, 2011). At an

organisational level, Japanese companies are historically hierarchical. This translates into intangible formality and rules (Dollinger, 1988). Employer-employee relationships resemble those between parent and child, or what Husted (2015) has coined “employer paternalism”. Executives are expected to show compassion, be exemplary and honourable. The lower their company length of service and the younger they are, the more respect corporate employees are expected to show to their superiors. This translates into exhibiting obedience while refraining from disagreeing or speaking out (Moorman & Blakely, 1995; Y. Wang, 2011; Wokutch, 1990). Employees seek out their managers for advice and shape their ethical conduct in line with their managers’ philosophies (Y. Wang, 2011). In a study of human resource managers, for instance, Brinton & Mun (2016) defined the Japanese context as one rich in hierarchical employee behaviour expectations, exhibited in unadulterated commitment. The Japanese hierarchical system was often found to have a negative effect on the development of CSR in organisations (e.g. Sugita & Takahashi, 2015) and corporate policies are the most influential elements behind managers’ ethical decision making (Nakano, 1997). Whereas hierarchy poses high burdens on individual self-realisation, with little social mobility among Japanese managers (Dollinger, 1988), Japanese employees have traditionally received protection and been guaranteed lifelong employment. As such, the strict rules of reciprocity have often been equated to harmony (*wa*) and “solidarism”, with subservience being traded for mutual social protection (Eweje & Sasaki, 2015; Fukukawa & Moon, 2004; Tanimoto, 2013).

Part of this reciprocal relationship of subservience and social security can be explained via the meaning assigned to *Seken*, or community in Japan. This differs considerably from its Western translation, and is one of the core pillars of social relationships within Japanese society (Boardman & Kato, 2003; Fukukawa & Moon, 2004). *Seken* has a much narrower meaning than its Western counterpart, comprising a limited number of internal stakeholders. This represents a smaller circle of closely related individuals who help each other within its boundaries and share strong interpersonal bonds, in family and friendship terms (Eweje & Sasaki, 2015). These territorial and blood relationships within a small group often exclude outsiders. In line with the structure of *Seken*, in the Japanese tradition

companies act as social collectives and contribute to society by satisfying their members' need for belongingness, also defining themselves as its constituents and beneficiaries (Nakano, 1997). This view of community clearly also modifies the meaning assigned to societal contribution in Japanese terms, which is intimately related to the continuation of business performance. This resembles the concept of collective economic benefit, with the company seen as contributing to society by *de facto* offering general employment opportunities (Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2009).

The Japanese view of collectivism, in particular, has contributed to a corporate staff need for identity and social belongingness. According to Nakano (2007), the Japanese, in general, nurture a strong need for company or social group identity and experience a higher sense of belongingness as part of a homogeneous culture. In a similar vein, they feel greater emotional gratification and motivation when their social 'face' is kept up. Lin & Yamaguchi (2011) defined the concept of *Mentsu* as individuals' public image in society with variations being tantamount to emotional mood. Caring for others raises one's social image in Japan, and keeping up this image in society has a positive effect on individuals' wellbeing, harmony and depression-avoidance. However, the implications of a powerful need for identification and group membership on CSR perception have long been considered unclear (Wokutch, 1990).

Despite collectivism's positive payoffs, the Japanese corporate environment has attracted numerous critiques, mainly from abroad. Japanese companies are repeatedly blamed for abuses in both social and environmental spheres, including mismanagement from the top and a lack of broader societal intervention (Husted, 2015; Kimura & Nishikawa, 2018; Lewin, Sakano, Stephens, & Victor, 1995; Taka, 1997; Wokutch & Shepard, 1999). This has led to substantial implications not only for external stakeholders but also for corporate members, who have seen their freedom to act and speak limited (Brinton & Mun, 2016; Dollinger, 1988). Chikudate (2009), for instance, has critically underlined low tolerance of error in Japan, resulting in a socially constructed reality of fear and public humiliation that he defines collective myopia. Tubbs (1993) reveals that the Japanese economic miracle of the 1980s was made possible by unquestioned over-work related deaths (*karoushi*). More critical viewpoints have stressed the heavy psycho-

logical burden on corporate staff, such as in having to maintain their Mentsu (Dollinger, 1988; Kimura & Nishikawa, 2018; Lin & Yamaguchi, 2011).

8.2 CSR in Japan

Japanese collectivism has been studied for its influence on specific business practices and the behaviour of the members of organisations (Lin & Yamaguchi, 2011). Arguably, this is particularly true of CSR which was officially introduced in Japan in 2003, the so-called CSR gannen, or starting year (e.g. Fukukawa & Teramoto, 2009). CSR information is increasingly available in Japan today, driven by increasing global pressures on large-scale Japanese companies (Fukukawa & Moon, 2004). Nevertheless, CSR as an internal practice in Japan met with only partial acceptance. CSR practices have encountered powerful scepticism from Japanese managers at various levels, with the main accusation being that it is a Western paradigm rather than a vehicle for stakeholder support (Fukukawa & Teramoto, 2009). Wagner-Tsukamoto (2009) pinpointed that managerial behaviour in Japan is idealistic and based on the *laissez-faire* idea of collective economic benefit replacing the need for CSR. As such, members of Japanese organisations, and CSR workers in particular, have been described as understanding CSR as nothing new, simply part of business as usual (Fukukawa & Teramoto, 2009). In support of these claims, Eweje & Sasaki (2015) argued that the decisive action taken by multiple Japanese companies to support the victims of the 2011 Tsunami are an example of powerful stakeholder solidarity, rather than necessarily to be labelled CSR. In addition, traditional Japanese job rotation prevents the members of organisations from nurturing a department-based identity (Aoki, 1990), especially in the case of smaller departments such as CSR. Nevertheless, more recent literature on CSR in Japan has highlighted that it is increasingly being embraced by companies for the value creation opportunity it presents. Tanimoto (2017) underlined that Japanese businesses increasingly frame meaningful dialogues with their stakeholders as part of their CSR work, and are now CSR reports leaders. Concurrently, the soaring relevance of CSR in Japan has been theorised as rooted in senior management, with particular reference to solidarism and

care. Kimura and Nishikawa (2016), for instance, highlighted that Japanese senior managers assign noteworthy meaningfulness to respecting others when orchestrating their decision-making, emphasising the existence of a top–down collective orientation. Eweje and Sasaki (2015) examined CSR work in 12 Japanese multinational enterprises in Japan, and concluded that Japanese organisations “have embraced CSR and identify its significance to their business”, making it an integral function of their day-to-day operations today (p. 686).

In sum, the literature seems to converge on Japanese organisations’ increasing responsiveness to CSR.

8.3 The Bangladeshi context and its apparel industry

As one of the least affluent countries in South Asia, a region whose proportion of people living on less than 1.25 US dollars per day is the highest in the world (George et al., 2016), Bangladesh represents the poorest of the poor. Inhabited by a Muslim population of 152.1 million in a limited area of 146,460 km² (CIA, 2016), Bangladesh is a traditional society in which most companies are family-owned, weakly-regulated and managed by a few individuals at the apex (Mair et al., 2012; Siddiqui, 2010). Political power is controlled by a small capitalist class (Uddin & Choudhury, 2008) which also controls the country’s politics and media (Rahim, 2017).

Caused by the power imbalances and patronage often determining community and legal relations in South Asia (Giuliani, 2016; Mezzadri, 2014), corruption in Bangladesh is rife both financially and politically (Sobhani, Amran, & Zainuddin, 2009). Local lords, for instance, often decide on various matters on the local level, such as land ownership in rural areas (Suykens, 2015). By contrast, the UN human development index highlights that 75.6 million Bangladeshis (49.5% of its total population) live under the multidimensional poverty bar and suffer from low income, schooling and access to drinking water (UNDP, 2015). Most poverty is rural, and the open scars of Bangladesh’s decade-long war with Pakistan, which ended in 1971, are still tangible (Belal & Roberts, 2010). Numerous

non-governmental organisations and civil societies have long played a wide-ranging role in the country, attempting to harness its rural communities' financial means, with dubious success (Banerjee & Jackson, 2017). Bangladesh's inability to ensure basic living standards has catastrophic implications for many of its citizens, ranging from child migration to the streets to child marriages and sexual abuse (Conticini & Hulme, 2007). The social void created by weak government enforcement of laws and regulations (Mair et al., 2012) has contributed to rampant corruption, nepotism and religious extremism (BBC, 2017). In particular, not only does the soaring power of limited numbers of families equate to centralised corporate decision making but it also encompasses greater influence on the country's economy and media (Rahim, 2017; Spence et al., 2016).

Perhaps controversially, Bangladesh is also the second largest clothing market, making ready-made apparel and textiles. In terms of turnover, with 28.14 billion US dollars' worth of exports in 2017 (RMG Bangladesh, 2017), its apparel industry quickly became the preferred destination of nearly 81% of international apparel buyers attracted by high production capabilities and low prices (BGMEA 2016a). This is supported by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Bangladesh Knit Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), which also have a powerful political influence on CSR and labour practices in Bangladesh (Islam & Deegan, 2008). High labour turnover has led to skill transfer from one company to another, and it is now approaching a mature level which boosts the country's development (Mostafa & Klepper, 2017).

While predominantly made up of young, unmarried and often "easily dismissible" women (Kabeer, 1991; Labowitz & Baumann-Pauly, 2014), Bangladesh's 4 million-strong workforce is paid the lowest salaries in the world and also consistently faces a variety of human rights abuses (Sharma, 2015; Siddiqui, 2010) ranging from gender inequality, maltreatment and child labour to lack of representation (Labowitz & Baumann-Pauly, 2015; Naeem & Welford, 2009; Needham, 2015) and additional grievances driven by migrant backgrounds (Welford & Frost, 2006). One of the most dramatic work accidents in modern history, the collapse of Rana Plaza, attracted worldwide attention (Chowdhury, 2017; Donaghey & Reinecke, 2018)

prompting an upsurge of foreign-led initiatives aimed at improving labour conditions (Berg et al. 2011, 2013; Needham 2015).

While its industrial base is currently a source of human vulnerability, via CSR the country's powerful apparel industry arguably represents a possible way to change working conditions and lift workers out of poverty.

8.4 CSR in the Bangladeshi apparel industry

In this predominantly Muslim country, CSR is traditionally understood as personal Bangladeshi executive engagement with society encompassing religious expectations of personal societal contributions which are often believed to exceed international guidelines set by the UN (Williams & Zinkin, 2009). The Zakat donation norm, for instance, requires executives as well as other believers to distribute 2.5% of their yearly net wealth to the poor, even though these payments frequently remain personal, unregistered and hard to assess (Jamali, Zanhour, & Keshishian, 2009). Muslims argue that wealth is considered as on trust from Allah, with public good rather than personal gain prioritised (Ullah, Harwood, & Jamali, 2018). However, it is impossible to generalise on the basis of religion, even within the same context. On one hand this is because individuals adhere to different ethical systems and religious demands in opposite ways (Williams & Zinkin, 2009). On the other hand, it is due to a lack of evidence on how executives frame CSR in line with the social and religious pressures (Belal & Roberts, 2010) which often influence behaviour and values in their local communities (Giuliani, 2016).

This is exacerbated in the Bangladeshi apparel industry by a belief that local executives not only lack CSR engagement, but also attempt to free ride other change actors such as labour unions or multi-stakeholder initiatives (Sharmin, Khan, & Belal, 2014; Zajak, 2017). As a result of this, much of the literature has argued for the importance of relying on the coercive pressure of buyers as drivers of CSR in a vertical sense (Belal et al., 2015; Rahim, 2017).

This reflects the legitimacy model fostered in the Anglo-Saxon world, prompting Bangladeshi executives to step up company CSR for fear of loss of business and antagonising their stakeholders (Islam & Deegan, 2008;

Siddiqui, 2010). Although many Bangladeshi CSR companies do not disclosing their CSR as a consequence of this, many do disclose what they do to shift the focus away from negative news (Belal, 2001; Sobhani et al., 2009).

Chapter 9

Methodology

9.1 The story of my journey to Japan and subsequent interest in Bangladesh

This thesis follows a qualitative and interpretative approach to theory in the social sciences. The selection of this specific methodology is justified by this thesis's overarching focus on sensemaking, including its connection with its constructivist ontology. As we saw in section 2, for constructivism objective truth does not exist and human reality is subjective and diverse. At the organisational level as well, individuals naturally make sense of and generate meaning in contrasting ways. The organisation, then, acts as an agglomerate of different and frequently conflicting viewpoints and perspectives leading to constant ambiguity and the need to reconcile it. This aligns with the importance of sensemaking in this thesis. Sensemaking emerges as a theoretical tool with which to overcome the complexity of a socially constructed environment. To glean the different perspectives of an organisation's members on specific phenomena such as CSR, it is extremely important for researchers to forecast how this is understood and its likelihood of dissemination across the organisation, including overcoming its ambiguities. Grasping this fragmented and changeable reality requires researchers to understand how individuals in an organisation construct meaning. The best way to do this is via the application of a qualitative approach stemming from face-to-face, individual and prolonged interaction with defined members of an organisation.

Researchers' familiarity with the context under consideration is thus profoundly relevant, during both fieldwork and theoretical analysis. Needless to say, this is even truer when studying sensitive phenomena such as CSR, especially in non-Western contexts (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Lockett, Moon, & Visser, 2006). Before embarking on an explanation of this thesis's methodology, I believe it is important to step back a moment for a brief aside on how I came to be connected with Japan and Bangladesh.

My curiosity about, and appreciation of, Japan surfaced long before my interest in researching in Bangladesh. After concluding my B.A. and M.A. studies in 2008, I joined the MaxMara Fashion Group in Italy. Despite my Italianness, I must confess that I have never really been interested in fashion. I feel that it was the job that took me in that direction, rather than the other way around. Somehow I hoped that working in a reputable, international company would give me the chance to learn more and, perhaps, start climbing that ladder of success which so many young graduates indirectly dream of. Despite my initial scepticism, I now believe that joining MaxMara proved to be the right decision. And this is not only because, just a month after my official appointment, the financial crisis shocked the world, halving the number of job openings for graduates in Southern Europe. But because it was, in fact, MaxMara that gave me my first encounter with Japan.

During fashion collection presentations, Japanese buyers and colleagues flew to our company and stayed there for about a week. I remember that there was something in their behaviour, their way of working and especially their way of communicating that I immediately found fascinating. My curiosity about Japan and the Japanese in particular grew. I started to attend Japanese language classes every weekend, and in summer 2009 I decided to attend a summer school at Sophia University. Being in Tokyo for the first time was a sea change experience. It was, perhaps, the impressive skyline around Otemachi station, or long walks along the lake between Yotsuya and Kagurazaka. It might have been the aura of mystery surrounding the Yasukuni shrine. Or, perhaps, it was just the feeling of being in a city that never really sleeps, with colourful Izakayas and salary men crowded around at all hours. All of a sudden I felt I was myself a character in a Murakami

novel. Frankly, it did not take long for me to fall in love with Japan and its people. After living with a host family in summer 2010 in Yokohama, I decided to move to Japan and stay there, at least for a while. The Tohoku earthquake that ripped through the country, causing havoc, did not dampen my enthusiasm. Certainly, getting a job transfer to Japan proposal from MaxMara made my plan even easier. In spring 2011, I was officially sitting in the company office in Omotesando, where I was to stay until summer 2014.

The months following my arrival in Japan passed quickly. I met many new colleagues, made new friends. I started to feel at home in the Shibuya and Minato districts. Although I thoroughly enjoyed my new Japanese life and networking opportunities, it was the nature and relevance of my job that prompted me to consider whether it was really what I wanted to do. With grandparents who had fought for social equality and liberty during World War Two, a profound concern for my contribution to society or lack of it began to emerge. In addition to this, I missed learning. From books.

This struggle grew to the extent that, in spring 2013, I decided to join a weekend MBA programme offered by McGill University in Shinjuku. Simultaneously, I started to attend the free seminars offered by the United Nations University in Aoyama more assiduously. I quickly realised how enlightening it was to listen to professors and UN experts from all over the world, especially on problems ranging from biodegradation to social issues. This raised my awareness of the world on many fronts. Professor Steve Maguire from McGill, in particular, became highly influential. I deeply enjoyed his classes on social and environmental issues. I also met new people from distinct Japanese organisations, with whom I started to network and engage in ongoing discussions on CSR and sustainability. In that same period, the Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh collapsed, causing the death of more than 1100 workers. It was probably the conflation of these events and social exchanges, added to my own reflections on society and life, that contributed to my decision to become sustainability and CSR researcher. At that point, however, my understanding of Bangladesh was still embryonic, except for a broad concern for the issues facing it.

Right after moving to Sweden in summer 2014 for my PhD, I flew to Bangladesh where I stayed for about ten days. Through personal connec-

tions in Japan, I was put in touch with a local organisation which audited apparel factories on behalf of Accord, an independent agreement signed by major international brands and designed to make all garment manufacturers in Bangladesh safer workplaces. These informal relations on the ground provided me with the support I needed and helped me make contact with the factories. I then flew back to Bangladesh in 2015, 2016 and 2017 for about one month each time. On each of those occasions, I visited factories and spoke to various factory owners.

As I tried to meet as many people as possible, all of my stays were quite intense, but I also sought to understand Bangladeshi culture as much as I could. To achieve that, in 2017, I lived with a traditional Muslim family during the whole length of my stay. I believe this short period was particularly influential and offered me a glimpse into how ordinary Bangladeshis think, behave and live their lives. Although I was often on the road during the day to do the interviews, I stayed with them in the evening. How should I then describe this period? It was quite different from what I perhaps would have expected. Even as a guest, I had to adhere to family rules which included the clothes I could wear (all skin had to be covered, even as a male) and when I was allowed to come out of my room in the evening (because of the women around). It was very educational.

I learned that basic necessities are not so basic. In Bangladesh most buildings have no electricity for hours every day and that is just normal life. I had to cancel many Skype meetings because there simply wasn't any power in the neighbourhood, and I quickly came to appreciate the importance of having a flashlight at night.

I also learnt about Bangladesh's cruelty, or rather the cruelty of poverty and complacency in the developing world. In front of the apartment building where we lived, there was a factory. It did not really look like a factory, but more like an old and murky shed with no windows. I was pretty shocked when I later had the chance to visit it inside and discovered that most of its employees were little girls and boys. But nobody in that residential area, not even the police, really seemed to be concerned about it.

By contrast, I was lucky enough to meet many Bangladeshi who were very open with me about their views and problems and received particular supported from some. These were people who not only allowed me into

their network, but turned out to be very reliable and friendly supporters, with whom I am still in touch.

This is the brief story of how I came to discover both Japan and Bangladesh, in a nutshell. The next section provides a scholarly overview of the meaning of inductive and interpretative research as part of broader qualitative methodology. A description of how the data was collected and analysed follows.

9.2 A note on the qualitatively inductive and interpretivist methodology

In accordance with its social constructivist purpose, this thesis pursues an inductive and interpretative approach to theory generation.

Although applying an inductive lens implies relying on newly collected empirics rather than the literature as a starting point for theory creation (Eisenhardt, Graebner, & Sonenshein, 2016), this does not necessarily mean starting from scratch. I specifically endorse Alvesson & Sköldbberg's (1994) argument that inductive research can never really be fully inductive. According to Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton (2013), some previous work has always been done, but the role of the inductive researcher is to remain “wittingly ignorant” of previous theorising to allow the emergence of new discoveries.

In practice, however, journals will most often require a link to pre-existing theories and this witting ignorance can thus only be relative. I also see being inductive as elaborating on pre-existing but poorly justified theoretical paradigms. Rather than fully creating new theories, this is often about repositioning and reinventing them in a new or under-scrutinized context (Van de Ven, 2007). This highlights the importance of context in nuancing theory, partly complementing Weick's (1992, p. 172) postulate that scientific research is about finding the contexts in which a theory holds true (or otherwise), even in qualitative and inductive work.

Most importantly, however, I believe that induction is never really possible without a researcher playing a key role in fleshing out meaning from the empirics, that is, showing an interpretative approach (Heller, 1989). As

Lave & March have noted (1975, p. 2), “speculation is the soul of the social sciences”. We observe and interpret people and their environment through precise but also imaginative empirical observations. As Gioia has explained (2003), adopting an interpretative lens does not entail doing interpretation research, but rather “rendering [...] the informants’ own understandings of their experiences, often in their own terms” (p. 290). So, the researcher’s goal is to describe. Acting interpretatively has an advantage over more positivist approaches not only in the study of social interaction among humans (Dilthey & Jameson, 1972; Lincoln & Guba, 1989), but to an even greater extent in studying grand challenges and how to solve them (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). As such, the researcher’s inner reality becomes the real object in interpretative studies. In this vein, researchers have been portrayed as philosophers (Dreyfus, 1980) or “glorified reporters” (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013, p. 17) whose responsibility it is to provide an adequate account of the informants’ experience.

In contrast to the natural sciences’ falsification-based approach, acting interpretatively allows researchers to extend certain theoretical assumptions around an audience rather than merely proving or disproving them. This is also what makes theory “interesting” (Davis, 1971, p. 309). Nevertheless, inductive and interpretivist research has been subjected to numerous critiques. For instance, it inevitably leads to personal bias. While this thesis embraces the importance of social construction as ontological standpoint, Astley’s (1985, p. 498) notion that a socially constructed truth is undeniably subjective in the eyes of the researcher is hard to deny. Amidst convergence around the acceptable boundaries of a body of knowledge, different researchers uphold opposing views and perspectives around the same empirical phenomena. This denies any objectivity in organisation scholarship, neglecting the potential for eradicating authorial influence (e.g. Locke & Golden-Biddle, 1997). While the researchers’ subjective viewpoint is often the focus of criticism in science, Gioia et al. (2013) warn us that the opposite can also be dangerous. Even if full objectivity were possible, it could lead to the risk of “going native”. This means adopting the informant’s view, but also leading to researchers losing the higher-level perspective necessary to informed theorising. The issue of subjectivity vs. objectivity adds to the problem of social desirability. This is the critique that interviewees seek to

“present themselves favourably”, especially when being asked sensitive questions on phenomena such as CSR (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). In the light of the impossibility of fully eradicating the pervasiveness of social responsibility bias, the aim is to alleviate it (Randall & Fernandes, 1991).

These and other critiques of qualitative research have various implications. On one hand, they have contributed to denting the credibility of qualitative studies. Qualitative research has been labelled “unsystematic and impressionistic” (Glaser & Strauss, 1999, p. 223) and seen by many scholars as incapable of meeting the high standards usually required to demonstrate scientific advancement (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013, p. 17). From an opposite angle, Pratt (2008) underscored that part of the low clarity surrounding qualitative research is due to inappropriate standards in assessing qualitative research during the review process.

On the other hand, these critiques have led to increased expectations and demand for rigour. The literature is evidently brimming with qualitative goodness criteria, requiring qualitative research to be uniquely expansive and more rigorous, but also to maintain its inherent flexibility (Eisenhardt et al., 2016; Tracy, 2010). My personal viewpoint is that the greater demand for rigour in the publish (or perish) process has often left qualitative researchers with no other choice but to appear more positivistic. I have limited belief in the perfect rigour-flexibility fit. One of the two will inevitably suffer from an increase in the other.

Glaser & Strauss (1999, p. 223), for instance, provide a concrete example of how the positivist expectations of journals have contributed to shifting sociology as a discipline toward verification theory, gradually linking it with quantitative research. This also confirms Pratt's (2008) description of the efforts made by qualitative researchers to increasingly mimic quantitative studies in order to survive the review process. Geertz (1973, p. 9) has referred to the importance of “thick description” to reflect the full details of a researcher's experience. Nevertheless, a similar approach to the publication process today would prove difficult to implement due to increasingly short article length. Despite this thesis's social constructivist ontology, I also believe that a qualitative researcher must surrender to the more pragmatic truth that, at times, these increasing expectations of rigour require an

alignment to semi-positivist and quantitative terms as often the main way to gain acceptance, even from CSR journals.

9.3 The importance of gathering primary data through personal interviewing

This thesis elaborates wholly on primary data, predominantly collected through face-to-face, semi-structured and opened ended interviews but also observations. The social constructivist viewpoint embraced meant that personal engagement in collecting primary data was of key relevance. As Siggelkow has highlighted (2007, p. 23) research “should allow a reader to see the world, and not just the literature, in a new way” and primary data is the chief means to do this. Whilst relative inaccessible, primary data allows for novelty and originality (Cowton, 1998), Liedtka (1992) underscored the significance of individual interviewing where ethical questions are involved, with the interviewer’s presence playing a paramount role due to unconscious and inexplicit reactions. The sensitivity of the CSR topic means, I believe, that interviewing an extended number of corporate cases is preferable to single case studies as a wider range of viewpoints is required to truly understand the phenomenon beforehand, especially in less common contexts such as East or South Asia (Zhao, Park, & Zhou, 2014; Zhao, Tan, & Park, 2014). Interviews are effective when attempting to contact individuals who are generally difficult to reach otherwise. Applying a semi-structure methodology, in particular, allows the data collection process to be midway between formality and informality, standardisation and non-standardisation (Bernard, 2000). Conducting semi-structured interviews means doing research into interviewees because the focus is on their terms and lived experiences (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013).

As part of qualitative theorising in the social sciences, the focus is on a comparison of individual cases rather than confirming a predefined hypothesis quantitatively (Patton, 2002).

Because of this thesis’s social constructivist viewpoint, in particular, it is important to note that embracing a qualitative methodology is not a question of obtaining cases to gain external validity. I believe that gleaning ex-

ternally valid causality is also not always correlated to the size of a study sample, but rather of the “talking pigs” or “black swans” that can be part of a sample (Siggelkow, 2007). The importance and external validity of the findings is linked to the uniqueness of the interviews themselves (Garriga, 2009). In the case of this thesis, causality was investigated in different corporate cases from locally observed contexts, attempting to provide an explanation for a phenomena at the micro and organisational levels (Eisenhardt, 1989; Tsoukas, 1989).

9.4 Data collection in Bangladesh

The Bangladeshi data I used in this thesis was collected in the country longitudinally, that is, in August 2015, August 2016 and May 2017. In sum, I conducted interviews with approximately 80 apparel factory owners, all face-to-face, visiting 90% of their factories in person. The remaining 10% of the interviews took place in Dhaka, at their city offices.

It is important to highlight that only some of the total 80 interviews have been included in the articles of this thesis. This is due to the fact that not all of the data directly fits the research questions, and I could only include two articles on Bangladesh in my overall thesis.

Given the English proficiency of the interviewees and my inability to speak Bengali, I conducted all interviews in English. All of the factories I visited were located in the various districts (Upazila) around Dhaka, mainly in Gazipur Sadar, Narayangonj Sadar, Savar and Kaliakair. These districts are famous for their large industrial conglomerates, especially relevant for apparel manufacturing. In order to move from one factory to another I rented a car with a driver on each of the occasions I was in Bangladesh. For security reasons, a local assistant was always present.

I made contact with the factory owners through the help of personnel from a local organisation in Dhaka. Its main task was to complete factory audits on behalf of the post Rana Plaza Accord and Alliance. I was put in touch with its owners through other personal contacts from Japan, gleaned during my MBA experience at McGill. Given my definition of CSR beyond compliance with buyer standards and local regulations, all of the factories contacted were already compliant on paper. After being introduced via

phone, I contacted each factory owner via email. The template used for the emails is in Appendix 1.

Despite local help, the total response during each of my stays was rarely above 30-35%. It took months to find a large enough sample of owners willing to participate. Much complexity was added by several unexpected events, such as meetings called off at the last minute or problems on the road, which forced me to reschedule meetings. On one occasion, for instance, a stone fell from a cement truck onto my rental car and smashed the front glass, basically stopping us from going anywhere. On another occasion students started burning cars in protest, and we had to find an alternative route to our destination, ultimately taking five hours longer to get to our destination. Traffic and distance considerations meant that I was able to conduct a maximum of two interviews per day. In compliance with the imperative of some of the Bangladeshi owners to pray five times a day, some interviews had to be broken off and restarted after prayers. Meetings took place at all times of day - morning, afternoon and also late at night.

Overall, each interview officially lasted 1 to 2 hours. There is an example of the questionnaire template in Appendix 2. Clearly, the chaotic and episodic nature of qualitative data collection (Eisenhardt et al., 2016) meant developing questions over time and refining these between 2015 and 2017, as research progressed. This was also partly because my role as informed researcher changed. In 2015 I had very little data and a limited understanding of the owners' context and viewpoint. By 2017, I could rely on quite a significant number of completed interviews and had had quite a few personal experiences on the ground.

Factory interviews were generally followed by visits to the factory. I was often allowed to visit all floors while work was underway. Clearly, there was little surprise effect, in the sense that the owners knew exactly when I was coming. It could potentially be argued that the image of the workers and the floors that I witnessed was an improved version of the normal state of affairs. Indeed, this may be a fair claim and a limitation to the study. Each factory visit lasted on average 30 minutes, but sometimes extended to an hour, depending on factory size and whether the company was undergoing major restructuring or upgrade work (as in the case of LEED).

During my visits I could take notes and I could even stop workers along the way and ask them questions. On some of the occasions, I asked some middle managers questions. However, I was not able to speak with workers directly. This was partly due to the fact that I do not speak Bengali, and partly because I was always accompanied by factory owners during these visits. Even if I had spoken Bengali and could have approached workers, I doubt that these would have disclosed their opinions and ideas to me in front of their bosses. It is also for this reason that I believe that local NGOs are much better partners for worker interviews. Established and deeply respected hospitality customs among Bangladeshis meant that morning or early afternoon factory interviews were generally followed by invitations to lunch with owners. Over local food, which usually consisted of rice, biryani and fish from the Brahmaputra or Padma rivers, we could exchange ideas and converse more informally. Taking formal interviews, informal talks and factory visits together, total factory visits rarely lasted less than 3 hours. This facilitated what Lincoln & Guba (1989, p. 229) call the relationship of trust between myself as researcher and the interviewer, cemented in the short period we spent together.

9.5 Data collection in Japan

Data collection with CSR workers in Japan all took place in Tokyo from October 2016 to March 2017. In contrast to Bangladesh, I had to concentrate the interview period into a few months, including finding all necessary contacts. Because of the focus on CSR workers, all interviewees had to be corporate members and work with CSR in Japan. Due to the limited time available, I set out to divide the data collection period into three phases. The first focused on starting a pilot test of 5 initial interviews to understand the phenomena better. Commencing the data collection with a small-sized pilot test is considered opportune in qualitative work in that it enables a questionnaire to evolve and gain cogency (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I collected the bulk of the data during a second, major phase. A last phase was left for those CSR workers whose busy schedules prevented them taking part earlier.

To widen my contact base, I made considerable use of my McGill Alumni local network in Japan. I knew a few colleagues who were not only working in CSR, but also engaged in social activities with other CSR workers. They not only agreed to sit for an interview, but also helped me open up their networks. They were the ones who introduced me to my five first contacts during the pilot phase of the data collection. Once I had been introduced, I contacted the interviewees via e-mail to confirm their availability. The email template of the email is in Appendix 3 and shows how I introduced myself and asked for an interview.

I tried to prioritise English as a means of communication, asking for interview in Japanese only in the event that English was not an option for the interviewee. Perhaps this is just my personal conviction, but during my previous work experience in Japan I often found Japanese people more willing to talk honestly in English, the main reason I preferred it. 11 of the CSR workers I interviewed, however, spoke no English, and we had to do the interview in Japanese. The template, complete with all questions, is in Appendix 4. The large number of questions meant it was not always possible to ask all of them at each interview.

I clearly wanted to get the most honest opinion from the interviewees and increase their perceived 'privacy' and feelings of safety (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). To lower the potential social desirability bias I offered to meet CSR workers outside their companies in more informal settings, such as cafés or meeting rooms that I had booked for interview purposes. Almost half of the CSR workers agreed with my proposal.

At the end of each interview, I used snowballing as a means to reach out to more interviewees. I then asked each CSR workers to think of 2 to 3 potential contacts in their networks and get back to me with their names. This worked better than I had initially expected. I was able somehow to reach a manageable number of CSR workers by the end of my stay in Tokyo and was impressed by the size of the CSR community in Japan and its openness.

Throughout the interview process, however, I did not focus on CSR workers from companies of a specific size or belonging to a specific sector, for two different reasons. On one hand, it was difficult to aggregate a large enough sample to make a relevant research contribution in those few

months. Building a concrete sample with companies of a precise corporate size or sector would have only been possible by staying longer in Tokyo or going back there later. For financial reasons, that was not an option. On the other hand, I also thought that looking at CSR workers from different companies could provide a more generalisable overview of CSR work in the Japanese workplace beyond a traditional focus on large multinational corporations (Acquier et al., 2018; Fukukawa & Teramoto, 2009; Inagami & Whittaker, 2005; Parboteeah, Cullen, Victor, & Sakano, 2005).

Because of the inclusion of some smaller companies, some of the CSR workers I interviewed were actually not working with CSR alone but had other duties too, ranging from marketing to operations. All the same I believe that this approach to interviewing CSR workers was both an advantage and a limitation, but it was also an attempt to glean different data from that generally represented in more official and standard articles. Although I focused exclusively on CSR workers who were Japanese natives to reinforce the Japanese case, 3 of these had Caucasian origins. The reason for including these in the study was the length of their stay in Japan, which had begun in childhood or adolescence.

In sum, I conducted 34 interviews, 29 of which were face to face and 4 via Skype and email. Although the interviewees were asked to book one hour, many voluntarily lengthened the interview time to an average length of 88 minutes. In the middle of the second phase of the data collection process, in particular, an 8-hour observation at which 7 of the CSR workers interviewed were present was undertaken. This observation was carried out during an event for CSR workers held in Tokyo. The event featured various seminars and workshops with relevant speakers but also socialising and networking sessions. I myself participated in two of the workshops together with the rest of the CSR workers. During the socialising session, as an observer, I stepped aside and took notes. Given that most of the CSR workers I was observing knew each other, I often had the feeling it resembled a circle of old friends.

9.6 Data analysis

In line with the qualitative trajectory of this thesis (e.g. Huberman & Miles, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994), all interviews were recorded and transcribed. In particular, I myself transcribed all the interviews in Bangladesh. With specific reference to Japan, however, the 11 interviews executed in Japanese language were transcribed by a Japanese native to ascertain written quality standards.

All of the data was analysed in accordance with both Corbin & Strauss (2008) and the Gioia Methodology. This was crafted by Denny Gioia, who initiated it with Kumar Chittipeddi (1991) and refined it in other studies, such as Gioia, Thomas, Clark, & Chittipeddi (1994). The last version of the methodology was released and fully explained by Gioia et al. (2013). Rooted in the social constructivist philosophy of science, this methodology is an evolution of grounded theory (e.g. Strauss & Corbin, 1994). It is relevant for highly exploratory theorising and serves to glean rich descriptions of the organisational contexts into which new phenomena are embedded.

In my view, it is perhaps the most advanced method which allows for a certain degree of qualitative rigour, while also encouraging the newness of new concepts. The Gioia methodology focuses on the systematic and inductive development of concepts as less specified precursors to constructs in making sense of organisational worlds. By balancing the inductive development of new concepts reiteratively, it offers higher rigour standards in line with those required by our top journals. Although multiple data sources exist in the social sciences that are reactive to greater or lesser extents, apart from archival records, field observations and media documentation (e.g. Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, Sechrest, & Grove, 1981), the heart of the Gioia methodology consists in semi-structured interviewing.

After the transcription process, which lasted approximately 4 to 5 months for data collected in both Japan and Bangladesh, I printed out the interviews and reread them many times to identify any potentially significant patterns. Although I set out to use NVivo, I started to code the data on paper toward the end of my PhD process on visual preference grounds. However, I maintained and updated an .xls file on the side as a way of reporting codes in digital format. Reading, re-reading and importing the co-

des from interview material allowed me to iteratively operate a more fine-grained and comparative analysis of texts, helping me manage the large amount of data more accurately.

The early phase of my data analysis is what Corbin & Strauss (2008) define open coding, and Gioia et al. (2013) label coding of 1st-order categories. This step allowed a large number of terms, themes and categories to emerge. For each of the data sets from Bangladesh and Japan, I gleaned approximately 50 1st-order categories. These large numbers added to process complexity, and finding a logical thread was also frustrating. These ranged from broad statements to phrasal descriptors, directly reported by the Bangladeshi owners and the CSR workers. This included very general assertions such as “Rana Plaza led to an increase in costs” among Bangladeshi owners to “top management doesn’t understand us” from CSR workers in Japan.

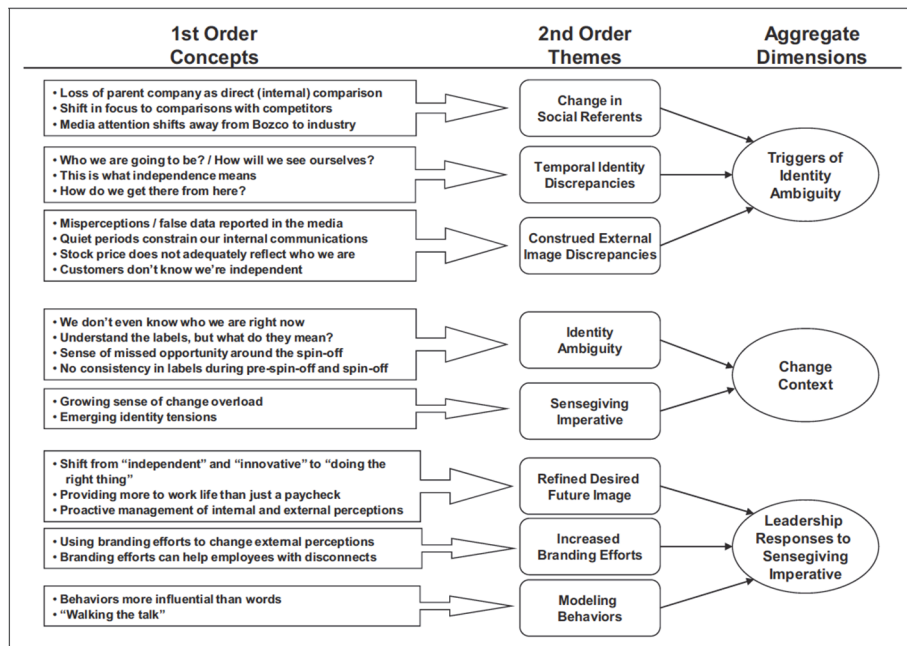
During this open coding phase, I also triangulated semi-structured interview data comparatively with publicly available and in print information to ensure data validity and reliability (Eisenhardt, 1989). As noted earlier, most of the observations in Bangladesh consisted of factory visits. This accrued to an A4, single paragraphed page of observations approximately for each factory visited. In Japan, I collected notes and memos during interviews. Perhaps the most significant data gleaned from Japan, apart from the interviews, was the 8-hr observation done during the CSR workers’ event. Additional secondary corporate data, both in Japan and in Bangladesh, mainly consisted of published and online corporate information, when available. I used the latter mainly for the purposes of benchmarking what the interviewees told me with what their organisations claimed to be doing, in case connections arose. In Bangladesh, this concerned corporate reasons for doing LEED (what the company claimed to be the reason for doing LEED and what owners had told me). In Japan, this focused on the importance of CSR for organisations (what CSR workers had told me and the approach to CSR claimed by the companies).

The second phase involved what Corbin & Strauss (2008) call axial coding, or the creation of 2nd-order categories (Gioia et al., 2013). After fully listing the 1st order categories, I looked for similarities and differences between them, attempting to establish causality by aggregating them and redu-

cing numbers. This is where the codes became more theoretical and abstract, feeding into a larger narrative. In this process, I attempted to operate a “gestalt analysis”, giving meaning to a totality or whole phenomenon through tentative relationships. I used theoretical sampling as a way of extrapolating specific information from the individual interviews capable of exhibiting a holistic pattern and delineating the boundaries of the phenomena I was looking for. In other words, this helped me establish a causal relationship from 1st order categories, developing a wider understanding and narrowing down the constructs (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). These constructs or nascent concepts that directly delineated the phenomena to be theorised were the 2nd order categories. In the case of Bangladesh, for instance, the numerous experiences shared by the owners arguing that their buyers resisted paying and that they were barely breaking even with LEED led to the construction of the “poor profitability” category. In contrast, implicit ideas about feeling proud of LEED and showing one’s importance to others helped formulate “social status”. On the other hand, CSR workers talking about the way managers adopted CSR to enhance their organisational image but assigned irrelevant tasks to the CSR workers internally contributed to creating the “managerial decoupling” category. The CSR workers’ perceptions of not being heard and being avoided within their organisations, including their desires for friendship, led to the establishment of “social silencing”. A status of “theoretical saturation” was reached once I found each 2nd order category to be adequately supported and no longer needing additional confirmation (Glaser & Strauss, 1999).

At the theoretical saturation point, the 2nd order categories were found to be in a causal relationship with aggregate dimensions as the phenomena under study. In the case of the Bangladeshi owners in article 2, for instance, the aggregate dimensions were collective influences of LEED adoption and individual influences of LEED adoption. In the case of CSR workers in Japan from article 3, the two aggregate dimensions that emerged as conceptual pillars of the paper were internal uselessness and coping approaches. Figure 2 shows a template of the data structure used, including 1st and 2nd order categories and aggregated dimensions in line with Gioia et al. (2013). This provides a graphic representation of the progression of the analysis from beginning to end.

Figure 2 - Standard Gioia data structure template



Source: (Gioia et al., 2013)

Chapter 10

The articles

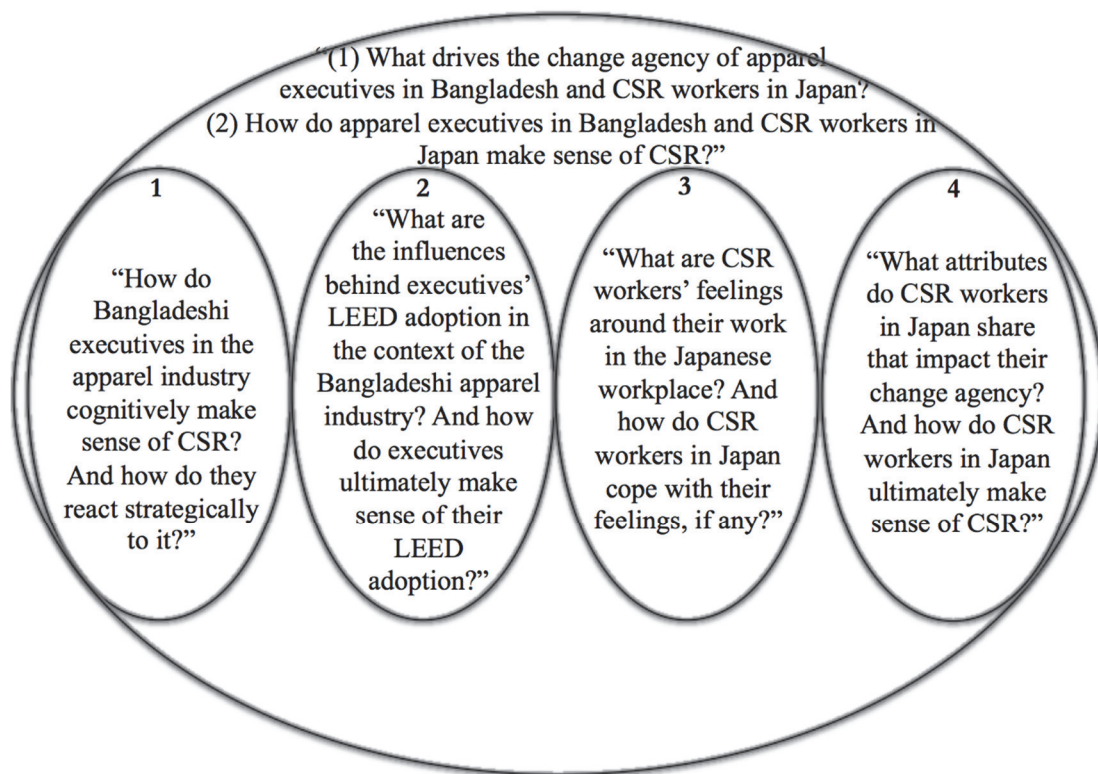
This section briefly introduces and illustrates the articles that will be part of my thesis. Figures and tables have been used in this section for illustrative and visual purposes, to facilitate reading and generate discussion. Figure 2 shows the overarching research questions followed by the different research sub-questions belonging to each article. Table 4 summarises the articles in this thesis comparatively, highlighting each article's analysis level, geographical sphere, theoretical field of contribution, context, subject of scrutiny, CSR focus, method, respondents (number of interviewees), status (published, under review, not published) and which international conferences it was presented at. Figures 2 to 5 show theory, research questions, data, methodology and a very brief description of each article.

The first two articles focus empirically on the change agency of the executives in the Bangladeshi apparel industry, while the third and fourth articles are on CSR workers in Japan. Article 1 stresses Bangladeshi executives' CSR sensemaking by scrutinising their cognitive antecedents as well as the behavioural consequences of investing in strategic CSR. Article 2, by contrast, focuses on the Bangladeshi executives' change agency. It focuses on their investment and meaning co-constructed around LEED, a specific type of environmental innovation, as part of their CSR agendas. The last two articles focus on CSR sensemaking among Japanese CSR workers.

Article 3 applies a dirty work framework to CSR because of its strong relationship with sensemaking. In fact, Japanese CSR workers feel that their occupation is emotionally tainted because of its decoupled status and irrele-

vant tasks. This not only drives negative emotions and consequences for their well-being at work, but also generates a range of coping approaches. This inevitably shapes the way they make sense of CSR. Article 4 maintains the focus on the Western meaning of CSR, but takes a more contextual perspective in explaining the CSR sensemaking of CSR workers in Japan. As we saw above, the rationale for selecting Japan as the focus of scrutiny was driven by its specific framing of CSR and societal contribution (Boardman & Kato, 2003; Lin & Yamaguchi, 2011), its societal scandals (e.g., Wokutch, 1990) and the recent apparent engagement of Japanese companies vis-à-vis CSR, especially through reporting (Tanimoto, 2017).

Figure 3. The research questions



As a minor note, it is important to highlight that the reason behind the decision to focus articles 1 and 2 conducted in Bangladesh on the apparel industry alone, while articles 3 and 4 focus on a range of industries, was the size of the CSR-related problem in the different contexts. As we have seen, the Bangladeshi apparel industry's reputation is extremely negative, requiring CSR to be used as a way of curbing negative practices to a greater extent than other industries in the country. This is also justified by the fact that the apparel industry in Bangladesh employs the poorest segments of its population. By contrast, I would like to argue that no specific Japanese industry requires CSR more than any other. Scandals have happened in the media industry (e.g. Dentsu), the camera industry (e.g. Olympus case) and metallurgy (e.g. Kobe Steel). That is why I believe that a more calibrated and inter-industrial approach between different CSR workers was required in the latter.

Table 4. An overview of the articles

	ARTICLE 1	ARTICLE 2	ARTICLE 3	ARTICLE 4
Level of analysis	Micro	Micro	Micro	Micro
Geographical sphere	Bangladesh	Bangladesh	Japan	Japan
Theoretical field of contribution	Strategic CSR, CSR sensemaking	Environmental innovation, CSR sensemaking	Dirty work, CSR sensemaking	CSR sensemaking
Context	Apparel industry	Apparel industry	Inter-industrial	Inter-industrial
Subject of scrutiny	Apparel executives	Apparel executives	CSR workers	CSR workers
CSR focus	Social and environmental	Social and environmental	Social and environmental	Social and environmental
Method	Qualitative (Miles, Huberman)	Qualitative and inductive (Corbin & Strauss)	Qualitative and inductive (Gioia)	Qualitative and inductive (Gioia)
Respondents	10	32	34	34
Status	Published	Under review	Under review	Working paper
Presented	No	No	B&S, 2018 EGOS, 2018 AOM, 2018	iABS 2018

Figure 4. Article 1

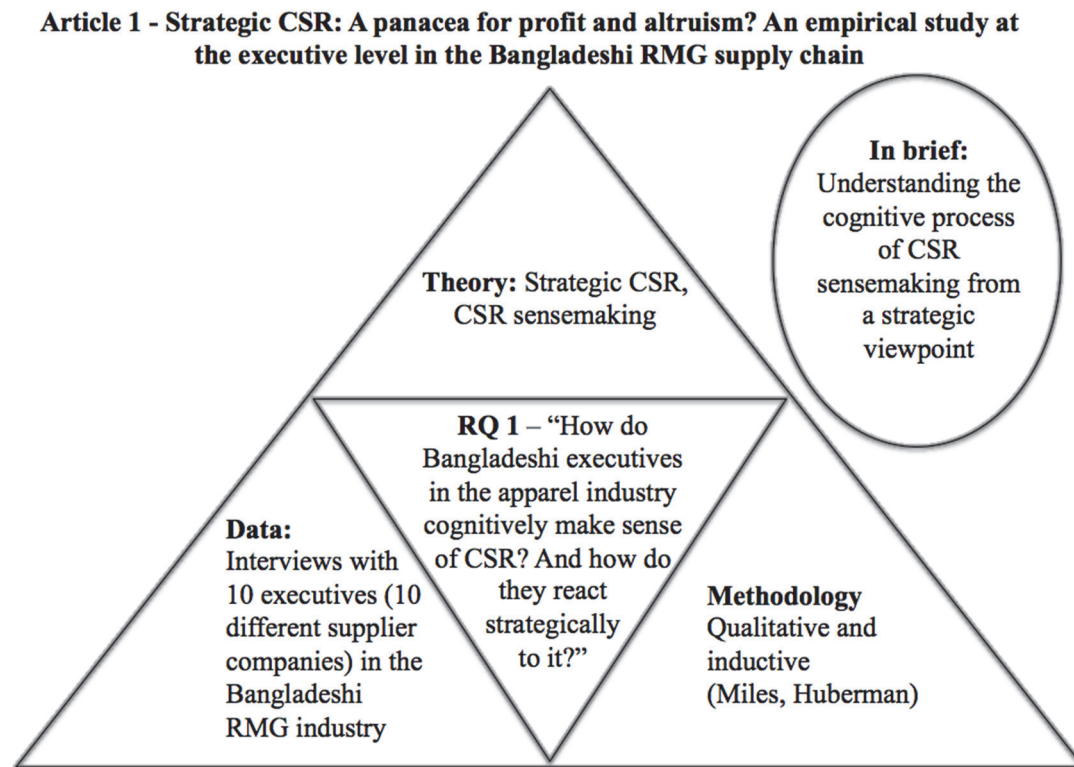


Figure 5. Article 2

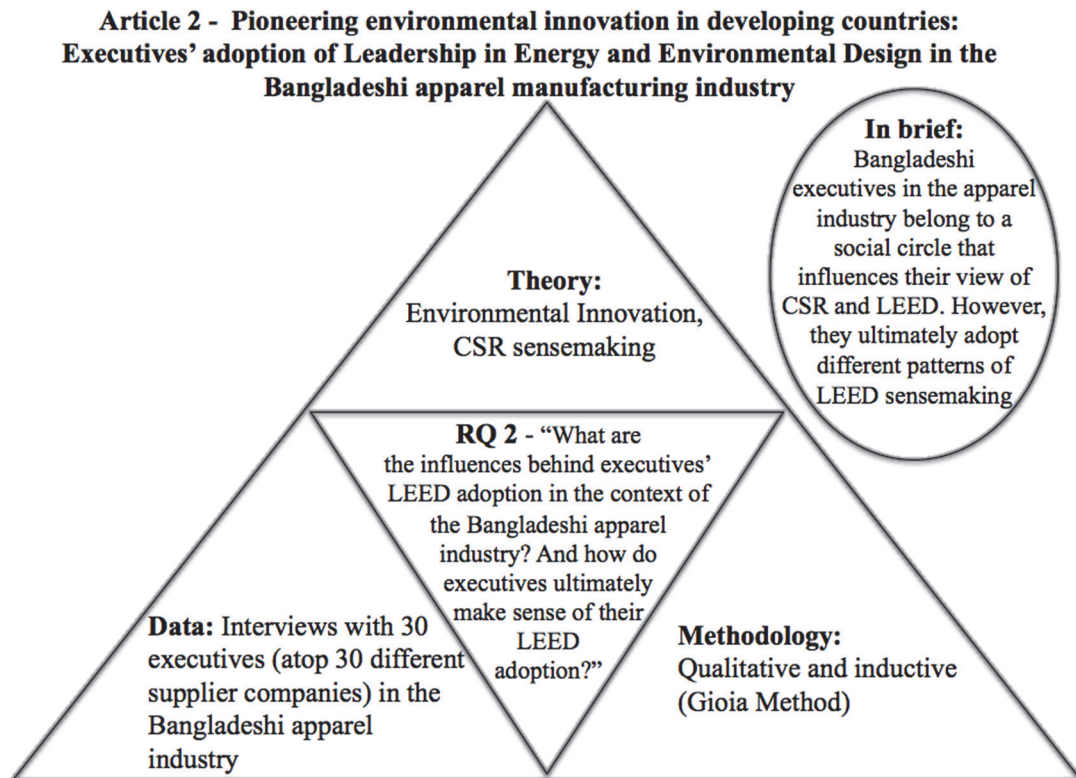


Figure 6. Article 3

Article 3 – When the main job tasks are perceived to be ‘irrelevant’ in the workplace: The internal uselessness of corporate social responsibility work in Japan

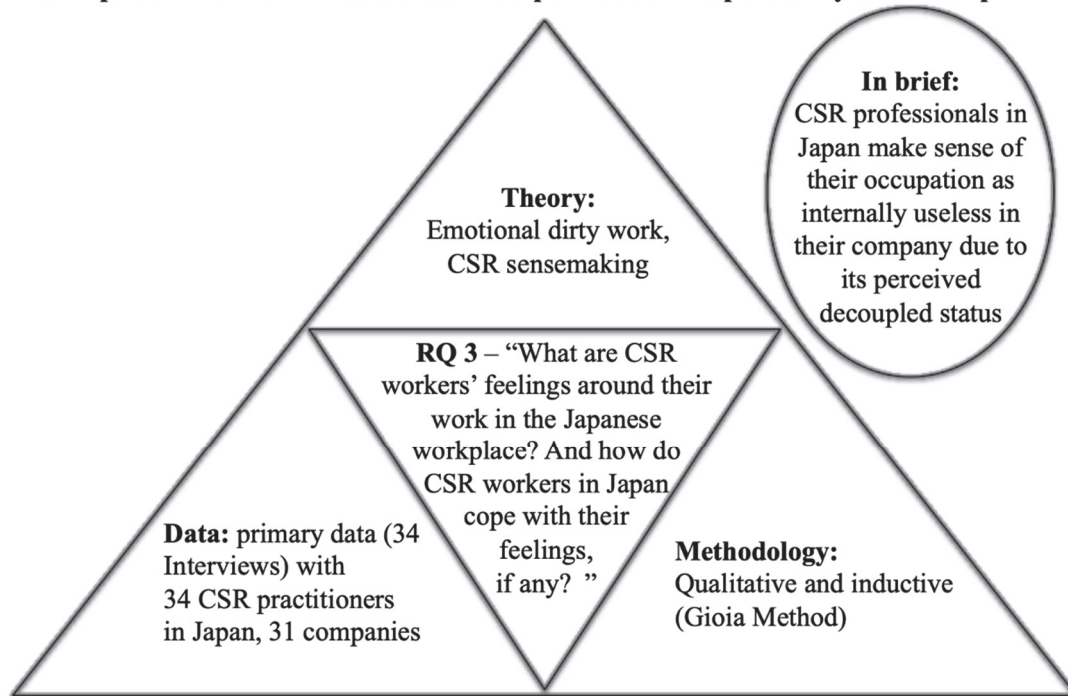
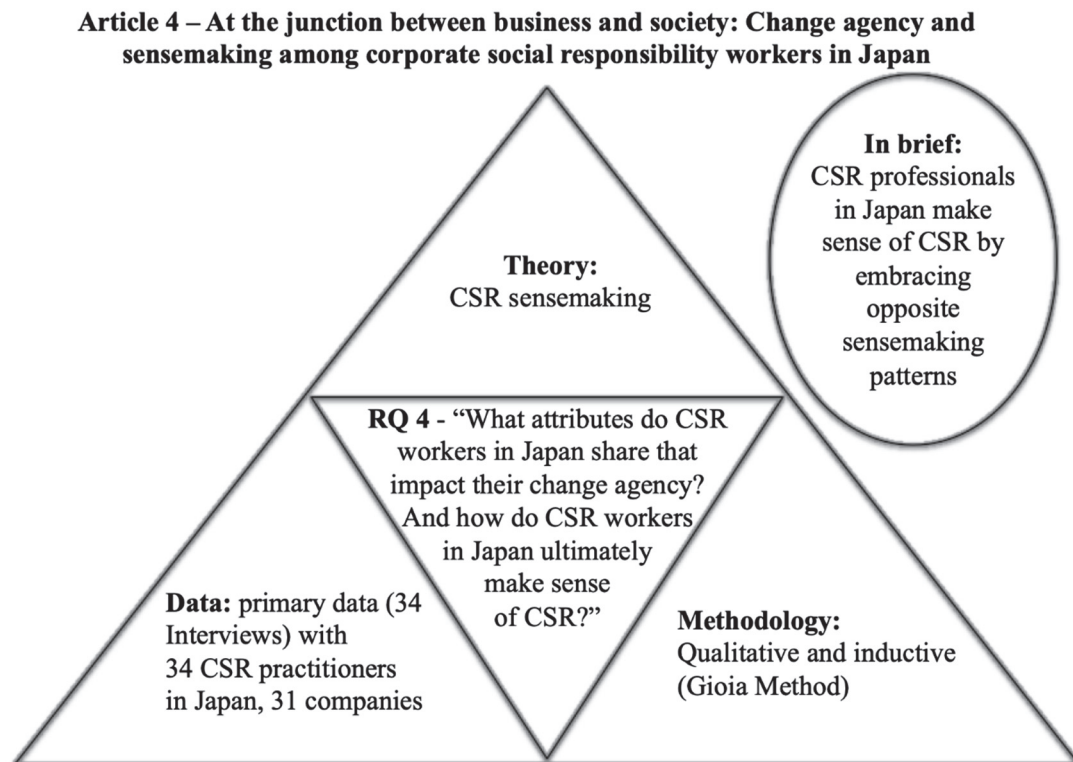


Figure 7: Article 4



Chapter 11

A summary of the findings, in a nutshell

This section presents a summary of the findings emerging from the articles. It is, thus, divided into two sections, in line with the two research questions produced.

11.1 First research question

The first research question proposed in this thesis asked what drives the change agency of apparel executives in Bangladesh and CSR workers in Japan.

The Bangladeshi executives interviewed for this study acted as change agents through their voluntary decision to do CSR. Because of the philanthropic meaning assigned to CSR in this thesis, the executives interviewed embraced social and/or environmental practices which went beyond compliance with local regulations and their buyers' standards. In article 1, in particular, 10 executives were involved in the study, interviewed in 2015. Article 2, by contrast, specifically focused on CSR through their adoption of LEED-certified factories, one important environmental innovation for building sustainability. This article involved 30 executives, interviewed in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

By contrast, the CSR workers in Japan sampled in this thesis were identified as change agents in that they help clarify, divulge and enact meaning

around CSR practices in their organisations. As middle managers, they were expected to do this in a bottom-up fashion before the start of the study, attempting to push CSR to their superiors, but also top-down, to the rest of their colleagues as well as those employees with potentially front line client contact. In total, 34 CSR workers were recruited and interviewed in a period of time stretching from November 2016 to March 2017. The data from these CSR workers was included in both articles 3 and 4.

The findings first revealed that the Bangladeshi executives' change agency went beyond a desire to gain competitive and instrumental advantages. For instance, almost none of the executives interviewed in Bangladesh made sense of CSR as potentially leading to higher market profits. On the contrary, about half of them hoped that CSR could lead to potentially long-term benefits through worker satisfaction and higher standing with buyers. Concomitantly, change agency also did not appear to be driven by a strong moral and altruistic purpose to do good for society. The majority of the Bangladeshi executives made sense of CSR as being beneficial for the workers and the environment, but they disclosed that this was not their primary reason for engaging in CSR.

What the fieldwork rather revealed was that the executives' change agency was prompted by mutual expectations of respect and pride, as well as alignment norms with others in their social network. The findings highlighted the existence of collective dynamics steering the executives' understanding of CSR but also that CSR was made sense as a tool for personal standing in the community and alignment, used to show to each other that they matter.

An informal network would seem to exist, made up of small and unofficial social circles of executives. This is sensegiving in function in that it enables executives to exchange information, build meaning around practices and balance their experiences, ultimately influencing each other's actions. These circles differ from the executives' broader and more formal industrial associations (e.g., BGMEA or BKMEA in Bangladesh) at which all executives meet periodically to discuss general practices. These social circles are often based on long-standing comradeship, family-ties and friendship relations. They are undeniably important, because they not only clarify how CSR is disseminating in the Bangladeshi apparel industry, but also

how its adoption can be facilitated. This differs from the classic meaning assigned to CSR simply as a tool imposed by buyers. In fact, much of the evidence reveals that the buyers seldom asked for CSR beyond compliance with their basic codes of conduct.

By informally conversing and sharing information about what they do, the executives made sense of CSR, that is, they provided horizontal expectations of how to behave with CSR. Perhaps most importantly, the findings reveal that this network of Bangladeshi executives - in touch with each other through their social circles - is highly hierarchical. Although most Bangladeshi executives are members of the elite, they are headed by leaders, representing the elite of the elite. These are people whose power extends well beyond the apparel industry. Leaders such as these - at the apex of the hierarchical social system - enjoy large resource pools, very strong political ties and the freedom to decide what to do, including what to do with CSR. However, their actions are important because they set new standards in the industry. By engaging in CSR, these leaders drive other executives to emulate them. Hence, others embrace CSR because they do not want to be judged inferior. CSR is assigned sense as a vehicle for personal respect and standing. As one of the interviewees explained with reference to the recent adoption of LEED in Bangladesh:

When somebody at the top has done it, we should also do it. We Bangladeshi have a nature that we cannot say no to each other [...]. It is difficult to explain. You have to do it. It's a social dynamic [...] I know that if I will say yes I will lose, but then again, I cannot say no.

Change agency through CSR is thus a vehicle for pride, respect and honour in the community, for individuals to show that they matter and boost their images. A large majority of the executives in the sample demonstrated personal pride and ego exhibited socially and a desire to raise their standing. This is a micro reality that is not generally taken into account and may arguably have tremendous implications for the adoption of specific CSR practices.

The negative side of this coin, however, is that executives are not free to adopt CSR as they see fit. Informally it is not acceptable for them to do more than the network's leaders as this would be considered a "lack of dis-

cipline” in the industry. In this way, social network leaders control the practices of the executives as a whole, encouraging alignment. While change agency translates as a tool for recognition, it can also never really be about going beyond what the top of the executives, or leaders, are doing. If it does go beyond that, it needs to remain implicit, and often to a smaller and undisclosed extent.

In contrast to Bangladesh, however, the Japanese CSR workers appeared to be genuinely driven by an interest in acting for social good. Many felt a human connection and intrinsic motivation in this respect which was often driven by their past childhood and lifetime experiences, such as their parents’ education and role. Although some of the participants in the study had been transferred to CSR departments, rather than deciding this of their own accord, the majority showed a sincere interest in working in CSR for society.

The most important findings from this study of CSR workers in Japan lies in their unofficial inability to execute their change agency, juxtaposed with their official business- society role. While executives in Bangladesh appeared to be less driven by an interest in CSR as a road to social progress, seeing CSR as tool for pride and mutual alignment, the Japanese CSR workers were motivated to improve society but simply felt unable to do so.

The findings demonstrate that the Japanese CSR workers had been recruited as change agents, but quickly came to make sense of their occupation as emotionally tainted and internally useless. They linked internal uselessness with the fact that their main duties were routine, unimportant reporting that they perceived as of limited utility to both the firm and society. In particular, many of them linked the irrelevance of their duties with a decoupling situation masterminded by senior management. CSR thus seemed designed to make the company look better, but was widely perceived by the CSR workers as internally viewed as a cost to be minimised, leaving little opportunity for actually doing anything for society.

As the evidence showed, the CSR workers felt that this dichotomy between their official and external role and their possibly unimportant duties triggered a ripple effect through other employees at various organisational levels by whom they are also seen as irrelevant. While this had negative implications for their well-being, they felt isolated and relied on other CSR

managers not only as a way of building a sense of community, but also to escape their internal organisational situation. By contrast, the findings also showed that they submitted to local norms and expectations in Japan, as regarded their senior management and organisation, ultimately viewing internal uselessness as unavoidable.

In sum, the CSR workers interviewed struggled between a desire to do good for society, and behavioural norms encouraging them to justify senior managers and their assignment of irrelevant duties. These norms stem from expectations of social collectivism, formality and hierarchy, in which senior managers are seen as fathers in their organisations.

As such, the CSR workers showed signs of psychological struggle and concern about their low respect which prevented them speaking out against their perceived grievance. Many of the CSR workers interviewed acknowledged the accountability of their senior managers and organisation for their internally useless status, but felt powerless and complacent. So, their assumed change agency notwithstanding, they had de facto little ability to create change. This resulted in a highly tension-laden role, in which their change agency was at stake. Possibly due to their upbringing, CSR workers in Japan both believed in and felt subject to the local cultural norms that impacted on the way they made sense of their status but also of CSR. Whilst they increasingly believed that Japanese traditional values were quickly vanishing, more than two thirds of them believed in an implicit Japanese citizenship and unspoken trust in their organisation's engagement in society, even if they believed it was not supportive of CSR.

11.2 Second research question

The second research question highlighted at the beginning of this thesis asked how apparel executives in Bangladesh and CSR workers in Japan make sense of CSR. The answer to this question is very much interrelated with section 11.1.

As the previous section showed, the Bangladeshi executives predominantly framed CSR as an opportunity for them to gain personal standing within their social network. This entailed earning respect and pride among their peers, including being seen or continuing to be seen as relevant pla-

yers in the industry. In other words, not doing CSR while others were was believed to compromise one's position, image and reputation. This was particularly the case for major CSR efforts, such as LEED, which symbolised major and evident engagement.

Despite the importance of standing and the poor association of CSR with potential for greater profits, many of the executives still believed that CSR could lead to some indirect benefits. These were rhetorically framed as hopes, but viewed in a positive light. In most cases, however, for CSR to deliver results it was seen as necessary to combine it with other investments, such as technology or infrastructure. Simply offering a new service to workers alone was not believed to be advantageous for the firm's workers. Offering workers new services in conjunction with greater automation or better facilities, such as LEED, was believed to enhance worker motivation.

In sum, much of the CSR related sensemaking varied in accordance with the executives' understanding of how CSR could bring indirect advantages and their belief that CSR could be beneficial for society. In the case of LEED, for instance, this led to four different cases. The sensemaking pattern case encompassing the most participants was the win-win pattern, featuring a situation whereby executives believed that LEED could generate some indirect long term advantages and was, at the same time, beneficial to society. A similar share of executives believed the contrary, however. They did not believe in LEED's potential for long-term and indirect advantages and were sceptical about LEED's contribution to society. These saw LEED merely as a hygiene factor, that is, as a way of achieving standing and aligning with their peers in the community. Those whose adherence to CSR was limited to its long-term advantages or societal benefits were smaller in number.

Although the majority of CSR workers in Japan exhibited a personal connection with society in conjunction with a feeling of the internal uselessness of their occupation, the findings showed that they interpreted CSR in different ways. Their sensemaking patterns depended on two specific continua, e.g. CSR advocacy vs. CSR denial and corporate advocacy vs. corporate denial. The CSR advocacy and denial continuum relates to the extent to which CSR workers believed that CSR has the concrete potential

to improve society and/or their firm. On the opposite side, the CSR workers' corporate advocacy or denial continuum highlighted their belief or otherwise that their organisation was already contributing to society. This did not necessarily correspond to the amount of CSR being done. In fact, many CSR workers believed that their firms were making a considerable contribution to society, whatever its internal support of CSR practices or otherwise. This to some extent echoes the justification assumption highlighted earlier, that it is particularly difficult for the CSR workers to admit that their firms are not contributing to society.

In sum, four different sensemaking types emerged, namely, a progressive CSR sensemaking type (CSR advocacy with corporate denial), a market-based CSR sensemaking type (CSR advocacy and corporate advocacy), an activist CSR sensemaking type (CSR denial and corporate denial) and a conservative CSR sensemaking type (CSR denial with corporate advocacy).

The most frequently adopted meaning for CSR fitted market-based CSR sensemaking. The CSR workers who assigned meaning to CSR in line with it believed that CSR as organisational practice would allow their firms to contribute to society even more, but might also increase its competitiveness.

By contrast, the second largest sensemaking type was the so-called conservatives. These believed that their organisation was already contributing to society and that the amount of CSR being done was not an indication of what their organisation was actually doing. They saw their firm's contribution in implicit terms, in accordance with a *laissez-faire* approach rooted in employment provision and basic benefits to society. In so doing, they highlighted the importance of an implicit societal contribution, which differed from the communication-based view of contribution in the West.

While those finding their firms guilty of not fulfilling their societal contribution were a minority, the smallest share was made up of those who did not believe that their firms were contributing to society, but were also unconvinced that CSR was the right approach to tackle societal challenges. These were people who fitted into the activist CSR sensemaking type, the most idealistic, expecting a major contribution from business to society going beyond CSR as an organisational practice for society.

Chapter 12

General contribution

CSR sensemaking, study of the meaning attributed to CSR by different members of an organisation, has gained momentum in organisational scholarship as a theoretical lynchpin with which to forecast organisational action for society (Basu & Palazzo, 2008). The goal of this thesis was to highlight the drivers of change agency among CSR workers in Japan and apparel executives in Bangladesh. In so doing, the purpose was to understand how these respectively make sense of CSR. As such, in this thesis I studied the meaning of CSR as a voluntary and West-based construct. I argued for the importance of considering change agents as those of an organisation's members who advance the CSR agenda within and outside their organisations in a planned way (Sonenshein, 2016). Hence, I also highlighted the importance of breaking down the meaning of CSR from an organisational and monolithic entity into the individual perspectives of specific social agents. This went beyond the view of sensemaking as organisational (Basu & Palazzo, 2008; Stensaker & Falkenberg, 2007), but also beyond the general focus on employees embraced by CSR sensemaking scholarship (Athanasopoulou & Selsky, 2015; Maon et al., 2008; Rupp, 2011). In response to the research questions, this thesis ultimately demonstrated different combinations of meanings at the individual level, producing distinctive patterns or types of CSR sensemaking with opposing characteristics. Whereas the contributions of each individual paper are spelt out in the papers themselves, this section is an attempt to summarise this thesis's aggregate contribution.

Firstly, this thesis contributes to the overall sensemaking literature by illuminating the diverse influences exerted by the horizontal networks of an organisation's members in Bangladesh and Japan, showing that meaning is co-created with homogeneous peers or friends outside an organisation's boundaries. Much of the literature on sensemaking focuses on the way meaning is enacted through intra-organisational social processes of interaction (e.g., Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015). Sensemaking studies examining stakeholders, on the other hand, define them broadly as organisational market actors (e.g., customers) or community players (e.g., non-governmental organisations) (Maitlis, 2005). This is also the case in CSR sensemaking literature (Basu & Palazzo, 2008; Cramer et al., 2006). This thesis underlines the importance of considering stakeholders inter-subjectively at the individual level of change agency. In particular, it directs attention to networks of peers and/or friends from other organisations. These play a predominant role in influencing change agents' meaning of CSR, interacting with them over extended periods of time and developing social relationships based on mutual trust. This complements the textbook view that members of an organisation make sense of ambiguous phenomena through intra-organisational workplace interaction, in both sensemaking literature (Richter & Arndt, 2016) and CSR sensemaking scholarship (Onkila & Siltaoja, 2017). From this perspective, it argues for the importance of looking beyond individual cognitive processes and intra-organisational social influences alone (Weick, 1993, 1995). The micro role played by the social network goes beyond the boundaries of the change agent's organisation and is often unaccounted for. In the articles, this was represented by the executives' social circle and the CSR workers' professional community. Paraphrasing Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991), social networks have a sensegiving function when it comes to CSR. Furthermore, this thesis indicates that change agents' social networks in Bangladesh and Japan trigger the need for sensemaking as they spread awareness of it. This extends the notion that ambiguous organisational practices are not themselves sufficient to stimulate the need for sensemaking (Barton & Sutcliffe, 2009). Awareness of this ambiguity rather needs to be brought up by others, who are not necessarily located within the same organisation. In Bangladesh, the executives accorded sense to CSR by means of fear of damage

to their images and personal standing. Subsequently, the Bangladeshi executives' network fostered their extrinsic and more strategic motivation, compounded with the demands of their personal egos. In Japan, the network confirmed feelings of internal uselessness among CSR workers, prompting them to elaborate on the roles of their organisation and the meaning of societal contribution. The CSR workers' network increased their recognition that their agency for society was actually decoupled, that is, they were *de facto* powerless agents.

This expounds Sonenshein's (2007) point on sensemaking as a cognitive thought process. However, sensemaking needs to be triggered first, and mere phenomenological ambiguity may not be sufficient for this. With specific reference to the executives, this contribution is relevant for sensemaking research in that much has been studied on the sensegiving role played by executives within their organisations, but not much work has been done on what gives sense to them in the social dimension (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Thomas, Clark, & Gioia, 1993). Crucially, the impact of horizontal social networks for change agents' sensemaking of ambiguous organisational phenomena constitutes an important and relevant field of inquiry on which future research might elaborate. If it were not for their social network, many executives would have not invested in more CSR and many CSR workers might not broad agree on the general problem of CSR as an occupation.

In sum, this thesis analyses the extra-organisational and social circumstances that prompt an organisation's members to embrace one specific meaning of CSR rather than another, ultimately driving the motives behind their actual or assumed change agency.

Secondly, this thesis contributes to sensemaking by shedding light on the importance of action in inferring meaning, challenging the assumption that action is a linear outcome of meaning. In doing so, it highlights a missing link in sensemaking scholarship. The assumption underlying the sensemaking literature is that ambiguous phenomena need to be cognitively unravelled, that is, meaning needs to be individually or socially adopted before action is taken (Maitlis, 2005; Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010; Weick, 1995). In CSR sensemaking literature as well, the rhetoric of an organisation's members is portrayed as a mechanism of meaning enactment that

leads to action with respect to key stakeholders and the world at large (Basu & Palazzo, 2008; Richter & Arndt, 2016).

On one hand, this thesis shows that change agents all decide to adopt or support CSR however different the meanings they assign to it are. Papers 2 and 4, in particular, highlight different sensemaking patterns among change agents, but all engaged in CSR unilaterally. This partially connects with Onkila & Siltaoja's (2017) claim, as well as the constructivist argument, that organisations are made up of a collective of heterogeneous meanings. By contrast, this contradicts the assumption that action is an outcome of meaning, emphasising a possible gap between meaning and action. Perhaps, then, the CSR paradox is not the purely cognitive dilemma it has been portrayed as (Hahn et al., 2014; Lüscher & Lewis, 2008) but rather a tension between action and cognition. Some of the executives interviewed adopted CSR despite not believing in it. Similarly, some CSR workers decided to work in CSR and support it in spite of their limited belief in the CSR concept. Although most CSR workers felt that their firms were not responsive to CSR and also justified it on the basis of normative commitment expectations in Japan, they still attempted to disseminate CSR as part of their roles.

This thesis demonstrates that change agency through CSR goes beyond its individually perceived meaning. It provides evidence that CSR action is, perhaps, more relevant than the meaning assigned to it by its change agents. On the contrary, action can be a reverse source of meaning. As meanings can homogenise overtime (Georg & Füßel, 2000) and creating meaning is a continuous process (Cramer, Van Der Heijden, & Jonker, 2006), seeking distinctions between current CSR meanings might be less important than analysing the way actions inversely lead to meaning over time. Research on CSR workers almost a decade ago (e.g., Fukukawa & Teramoto, 2009) claimed that CSR workers decided to work in CSR even if they did not fully agree on the importance of CSR. Today, much of this ambiguity and even decoupling remains, but arguably, action has convinced many CSR workers that CSR might actually be useful in addition to it honouring their firms.

On the other hand, this thesis expands Patriotta & Spedale's (2009) work that the co-presence of participants during group-based interaction is in itself an occasion for sensemaking because of the shared construction of meaning which takes place. However, this contravenes the assumption that

the achievement of social consensus leads to positive CSR sensemaking outcomes. These executive and CSR worker cases confirmed the consensus over negative CSR meanings. While many executives interviewed understood it as a cost, the CSR workers saw it as an emotionally tainting practice in personal career terms, ultimately justifying their organisations not engaging in it. Some of the executives had even persuaded their peers not to do any CSR. Many were also not convinced it led to actual societal benefits. Fundamentally, if they were to follow the commonly shared meaning of CSR, they would have distanced themselves from attempting to adopt any change agency. While any consensus at all might appear positive for the creation of meaning, negative consensus may hamper the development of CSR. This shines a spotlight onto the meaning of consensus, which it is often believed to be positive in the sensemaking literature. On the contrary, the various interviewees followed the actions of their peers, going beyond negative CSR meanings. This highlights the existence of a more imperceptible group dynamic that is detached from the meaning assigned to specific phenomena, linking to Angus-Leppan, Benn, et al.'s (2010) notion of power differentials among different change agents. This is more implicit nature at the group level, and goes beyond the rhetoric and meaning enacted in a group.

Finally, this thesis contributes to CSR by providing empirical insights into CSR meaning and dissemination in two non-Western contexts, and the way change agents in these settings struggle with its imported meaning. According to Athanasopoulou & Selsky (2015) the CSR field may benefit from integrating different perspectives, that is, studying how the contextual and cultural layers of society affect the members of an organisation at an individual level. The interviews confirmed that both Bangladesh and Japan are highly hierarchical contexts, organisationally speaking. In this sense, the ability of change agents to operate appeared to be tantamount to power, which appeared in the interviews to be directly correlated with their hierarchical position in the organisational chart. With reference to Collier & Esteban's (2007) remarks that some aspects of culture are visible and tangible, operating at an unconscious level. (p.22), this thesis showed that Bangladeshi and Japanese cultural collectivism leads to a high degree of imitation among homogeneous types of peers.

In Bangladesh, the greater an executive's power and hierarchical position, the greater his or her influence on the surrounding area and the more impactful his or her decision-making and ability to influence the CSR meaning of other executives in other organisations. This drives a desire for power and image among top executives, beyond public awareness and sustainability values (Kearins & Collins, 2012). In Japan, CSR workers as middle managers had little power to express their change agency in their companies. This, in turn, revealed that they had often no *de facto* change agency. This was due to a perceived lack of top management support for CSR and its decoupled approach to it, adding to what Sonenshein (2006) has defined economic embellishing, with issue crafting being forced on those members of an organisation who hold relatively less power. Although the fact that executives' behaviour facilitates or hampers the understanding and dissemination of CSR in their organisations is a generalisable assumption (Aguilera et al., 2007; Park & Stoel, 2005; Ramus & Steger, 2000), this is even more problematic in Japan in that Japanese ethics are crafted around top management's will (Boardman & Kato, 2003; Wokutch & Shepard, 1999). As bottom-up individual initiatives appeared seldom to be welcomed, this creates cognitive tensions among CSR workers. Arguably, for middle managers such as the CSR workers, finding an economic justification for their actions is considered to be the only way to push the CSR agenda forward. This shows the way in which a lack of managerial support for CSR can lead to de-coupling such as the implementation of unsupported CSR by an organisation's members (Weaver, Treviño, & Cochran, 1999; Weaver, Treviño, et al., 1999).

Chapter 13

Practical implications for managers and non-scholars

Responding to the research questions posed at the beginning of this thesis is important in that they offer a number of practical implications for both supplier executives and buyer managers operating in the Bangladeshi apparel industry but also for CSR workers and their top managers in Japanese firms. The decision to divide this section into two parts is based on the importance of recognising the different contexts, which can hardly be considered together on a practical level.

13.1 Practical implications for buyer managers and supplier executives in Bangladesh

This thesis sheds light on the existence of apparel executive social networks which influence executives' adoption of CSR practices. By showing the hidden complexities associated with the adoption of CSR practices independently, it highlights the importance of cooperation between buyer companies and their suppliers but also between groups of different buyers and groups of different suppliers.

This subsection specifically provides suggestions both for buyer managers (e.g. managers working in international buyer companies) and supplier executives operating in the Bangladeshi apparel industry.

Firstly, buyer managers should be aware of the existence of situated and horizontal dynamics shaping the dissemination of CSR in their industries. As such, they should not simply work on a one-to-one basis with their own suppliers to implement and promote CSR, but consider the influence exerted by neighbouring apparel suppliers upon their suppliers' CSR. The influence of other apparel suppliers potentially both hinders and facilitates CSR implementation, depending on what they already do. Although buyer managers need to discuss the implementation of CSR practices with corresponding apparel industry associations in Bangladesh (e.g. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturer Export Association), they should discuss what other companies are doing with top neighbouring supplier company executives together with the possible implications of new CSR initiative implementation on them.

Secondly, buyer managers should also ensure that their CSR demands are shared across the board by other buyer companies in order to raise such standards collectively. As of today, most buyers rely on individual codes of conduct complying with international norms and local regulations but individually crafted and varied, especially where they go beyond basic demands. Multi-stakeholder agreements such as the Bangladeshi Accord and Alliance have shown that improving working conditions is possible if buyers work together. Consequently, greater collaboration between buyer managers is required to facilitate the dissemination of CSR together. As most joint working between buyer companies predominately feature large-scale buyers, however, buyer managers in large-scale companies need to reach out to smaller firms. This is because the greatest CSR problems are to be found among smaller suppliers who often work with small buyer companies. The responsibility of buyer managers involved in joint working should encompass ensuring that smaller buyer companies are also participating, thereby facilitating change together.

Thirdly, buyer managers should be able to quantify and reward supplier CSR efforts, providing financial or material support. As of today, buyers have been accused by their suppliers of demanding CSR while also not paying for it. This increasingly dents the credibility of their relationship and increases scepticism. This is problematic in a contested industry where lack of trust could potentially lead to dangerous implications and an increase in

risk. Although introducing reward schemes might be accused of commoditising CSR, these might also encourage suppliers to seek direct benefits through CSR and strengthen relationships.

Arguably, the problem lies in the fact that buyer companies are keen to keep costs down. Remunerating or providing material support for CSR inevitably increases costs for buyers. When entering a difficult market such as the Bangladeshi apparel industry, however, buyer managers should recognise that business as usual is hardly a viable solution because of the risk involved in avoiding CSR. Consequently, it is increasingly important for buyer managers to convince their stakeholders worldwide that they are leaders in bringing change. Although this will inevitably incur costs, it is likely to pay off in the long term.

Fourthly, supplier executives should speak directly and more frequently to their buyer managers concerning problems associated with CSR and its implementation in the rest of the business community. During interviews, most supplier executives highlighted issues that they did not feel confident sharing in the belief that their buyer companies might not be interested in it. However, emphasising the implications of CSR dissemination in the business community increases awareness and potentially prompts buyer companies to act.

Finally, supplier executives should keep track of the CSR they are doing in their companies and present it to their buyer companies as a tool with which to increase competitiveness and gain market advantages beyond the social and environmental support they provide. Discussions with the executives interviewed demonstrated that CSR in Bangladesh is still very much linked to charitable action for the community and workers and, as such, frequently remains undisclosed. Although sharing CSR practices might not necessarily increase prices upfront, it can consolidate relationships with buyer companies and raise awareness. As such, it may eventually prompt the latter to support it.

Thus, buyer managers and supplier executives should meet more often for the specific purpose of CSR to understand how they can benefit from each other's support, how to overcome potential CSR problems and discuss how to make their actions more scalable in the industry. Advancing the CSR agenda does not mean starting from scratch. It may also mean

making current action more explicit and understanding each other's perspectives and concerns. Although this might not appear to bring immediate advantages for both parties, it will inevitably reinforce their relationship and help disseminate CSR practices in a very challenging context.

13.2 Practical implication for top managers and CSR workers in Japan

In becoming some of the most prolific CSR report production generators in the world, Japanese companies have understood that CSR can no longer be dodged. On the contrary, this thesis helps uncover an organisational scenario in Japan in which companies have yet to understand how to make use of CSR and boost its potential for themselves and society.

This thesis shows that CSR workers in Japan feel disempowered and unable to advance CSR agendas in their firms. Their predominant focus on reporting channels feelings of uselessness and poor motivation. This thesis urges companies in Japan to shift from accepting CSR to integrating it into their missions. Although CSR can be of great value for both business and society, widespread understanding of it and integration may be the greatest challenges.

Apart from broadening the debate on CSR in Japan, this subsection prompts new reflections and guidelines and has practical implications for top managers and CSR workers in Japan. Focusing on ensuring top management's support is particularly relevant in Japanese firms for the purpose of pushing the CSR agenda forward as a result of the hierarchical structure of most Japanese companies and collective workforce behaviour adhering to top management's mindset.

Firstly, this thesis suggests that top managers in Japan need to establish a CSR structure, thus helping give it career status in their firms. The evidence collected shows that many CSR workers were transferred to the CSR department on a non-voluntary basis. Consequently, few deliberately chose to work in CSR leading to CSR work being seen in Japan as temporary, without a clear career path.

Top managers need to implement career progression for CSR. This should involve establishing more appropriate selection and promotion guidelines for specific applicants based on their ambitions and will to work in a profession at the crossroads between business and society. Simultaneously, top managers need to clarify future career opportunities for CSR workers in their firms, ensuring personal growth at the professional level but also ambitious goals. This will inevitably give CSR workers confidence and potentially attract more individuals inside and outside the company who feel they want to be part of it. At the current moment, many who would like to work in CSR are not given the chance, while others who are working in CSR may not necessarily feel that this is where they want to be. In the light of this lack of clarity and career path, working with CSR will always be interpreted as something temporary, perhaps unwanted and poorly motivating.

Secondly, top managers in Japan need to redefine and widen CSR workers' professional portfolios, ensuring a concrete link with the firm's material goals. This means ensuring CSR workers training and education on the job, supporting more regular meetings with various stakeholders inside and outside the company to understand their needs, but establishing clearer expectations. This might prompt CSR workers to engage more proactively in specific CSR activities which are more important to the company than mere reporting and of benefit to it.

Although prioritisation of CSR as a corporate profession may require more resources to be allocated to CSR practices, a clearer focus on results, KPIs and the company mission is needed if these investments are to be translated into long term potential. As has emerged here, one of the reasons for CSR's negative connotations in many Japanese companies is its association with costs. Although investment in CSR is unlikely to bring immediate results, this myopic understanding of CSR work as cost not only limits its potential but also damages its long-term reputation, image and ability to generate results.

Thirdly, top management should not limit CSR practices to the CSR department but encourage all departments to establish special ambassadors or champions who may not work directly in the firm's CSR but have a personal interest in supporting CSR workers in their mission and voluntarily

taking on this responsibility. This is particularly important as CSR workers need social anchors in the organisation whom they can rely on support from.

Such fundamental steps at top management level in Japan would inevitably facilitate the creation of a culture of acceptance of CSR in their firms, motivating current CSR workers and turning CSR into a more appealing occupation. In so doing, it might not necessarily take long for other company middle managers and employees to appreciate CSR and follow suit. Despite the important of top management action, however, this thesis also accords considerable importance to CSR workers.

Firstly, Japanese CSR workers should take advantage of their social circles to change their company status. This thesis shows that most CSR workers in Japan meet up to share information. These formal and informal social circles are indeed a very powerful tool for CSR workers to set up projects and co-operate but also to increase professional legitimacy and cohesion. It is particularly striking that some CSR workers travel to Tokyo many times a month from every corner of Japan to meet up with other such staff. However, they ultimately seek justification for the status of CSR work in their firms and surrender to the status quo. Although part of their “shoganai” behaviour is clearly driven by situated social norms in Japan, their inability to act as a collective is harmful to them. They should be more outspoken and act together to bring change. Regardless of the level of acceptance of CSR in their firms, relying more on each other not only for friendship and social understanding, but also to act as an aggregate group, will always be beneficial.

Secondly, CSR workers should seek to work with other company employees or managers who may sympathise with CSR. Although this thesis demonstrates that CSR workers in Japan face a range of social difficulties in firms that not only make their jobs more difficult but also isolate them, finding and teaming up with a few specific supporters of their cause might help to get their message across. These are social anchors with whom CSR workers may not only raise their morale but also help get information on CSR, thereby improving the quality of the job they do. One way to do this is to start ambassadorship programmes in which employees can freely share their ideas and opinions about CSR-related issues.

Thirdly, CSR workers in Japan should consider that CSR translated into societal contribution in more indigenous terms in Japan does not have to be contrary to the international view of CSR. The two perspectives might very well complement each other rather than cancelling each other out. Although limited in number, some CSR workers appeared sceptical about the ability of CSR practices to create benefits for society. Perhaps, these CSR workers should shift their discussions toward how to contribute to society while respecting the indigenous contribution but also ensure that their companies follow the rules and CSR international standards required to ensure its ability to perform in the market. Although the difference between these two meanings of CSR clearly leads to much more complex discussions that cannot be summed up in a few paragraphs, the greatest challenge for CSR workers in Japan will be becoming social ambassadors whilst meeting both Japanese and international expectations.

Chapter 14

General limitations of this thesis and suggestions for future research

This thesis has many limitations. I will narrow them down to five chief points, connected with some potential suggestions for future research.

Firstly, it focused on the CSR sensemaking of change agents alone. As such, it is skewed in that it does not represent CSR meaning as exhibited by the overall population of executives in Bangladesh and middle managers in Japan. Although the decision to focus on change agents was justified by a desire to study CSR “leaders” rather than “laggards”, there certainly are multiple categories of people at different levels of an organisation who attribute very different meanings to CSR. Likewise, this thesis provided evidence of the perceptions of two different types of change agents only. As such, the situation highlighted is that perceived by those specific change agents interviewed. This accords with the constructivist philosophy belief that reality is never generalisable but made up of a heterogeneity of opposing viewpoints. Nevertheless, in order to gain a broader perspective of the meaning of CSR, it would be opportune for future research to focus on the CSR meaning of other specific categories of an organisation’s members who might have very different reasons for according it positive or negative meaning as well as in supporting CSR practices in their organisations or otherwise. An important suggestion would be to look for the existence of multiple change agents within a single organisation, apart from the ones

highlighted, and examine whether they share similar CSR sensemaking patterns to that analysed here or otherwise.

Secondly, this thesis was implemented in a fully qualitative fashion. The decision to do so was substantiated by the philosophical assumption that language is the purest vehicle with which to portray reality. However, and similarly to the previous point, it can only include a narrow number of respondents. This was very low for article 1, but also never went beyond a total of 30 interviewees for the other studies either. A quantitative study, or, perhaps, a mix method study conflating qualitative and quantitative perspectives on a large sample, would certainly add quality and enhance credibility.

Thirdly, this thesis focused on the meaning of CSR as an imported, Western notion in Bangladesh and Japan. These are very different contexts, with cultural, religious and historical backgrounds making them unique. The decision to do so was justified by the fact that CSR practices can be defined as having to respect contextual realities, but they are increasingly standardised worldwide (Rasche et al., 2017). Time and space considerations meant that this thesis could not explore possible conflicts between the meaning and interpretations of CSR as an imported, Western context with the indigenous meaning of societal contribution. Undoubtedly, this is a fascinating field that deserves much scrutiny. Investigating it further in future research could provide even more insight and a much stronger justification for the opinions of the interviewees from the studies presented here.

Fourthly, and with reference to Bangladesh, this thesis focused entirely on the apparel industry as an empirical field of study. Although the justification for this was the societal problems specifically pertaining to the apparel industry, other executives in different industries in Bangladesh might have very different opinions concerning CSR practices, and potentially very good, conflicting reasons to support or reject them. Similarly, the meaning around CSR obtained from executives in the apparel industry in Bangladesh might be very different from the meaning conveyed by other executives in the apparel industry of other countries in South Asia. Future research could broaden the geographical sphere to executives operating in the apparel industry of other comparable countries, or focus on Bangladesh and, there-

fore, the meaning of CSR as expressed by change agents over a number of industries.

Finally and with reference to Japan, this thesis treated CSR as a general set of practices. There are, in fact, many issues within the broader CSR realm that are particularly salient in Japan. Although they have not been dealt specifically by this thesis, they emerged continually during the interviews. These pertain, for instance, to gender diversity, work-life balance and corporate governance in the intra-organisational dimension. Scrutinising the meaning and also the implications of these specific categories of CSR in various papers concerning members of Japanese organisations, rather than applying a broader CSR lens, would be very fruitful in exploring the nature of the problems but also the constraints on improving CSR workplace practices in Japan.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Email sent to factory owners in Bangladesh (after first contact)

Mr. ABC good day,

my name is Enrico Fontana, a researcher at the Stockholm School of Economics in Sweden. I am originally from Italy and I have myself worked for 6 years in the Fashion Industry, in Italy and Japan, respectively.

As you might have been informed already by Mr. ABC who gently introduced me to you, I am currently conducting a research focused on Supply Chains and sourcing in the Bangladeshi Fashion Industry. As I am going to be in Dhaka during the incoming month of August, I am here to ask you whether it would be possible to have an informal meeting and discussion with you (1hr), during which I can ask you a few questions on the topic.

Please feel free to contact me directly,

Thank you very much,

Best wishes,

Enrico Fontana

Appendix 2 - Template used for the interviews in Bangladesh

GENERAL MARKET QUESTIONS

What is your production? i.e.: knit, wool, etc.

How many people work in your company and group of companies?

When was the company created?

Is the company part of a larger group?

What is your most important brand?

How much percentage is your main brand buying?

How long have you been working with your brands (and most important one)?

Are you working directly with your brands or through agents?

How many pieces is your capacity per month?

Are you vertically integrated?

Do your buyers nominate suppliers?

If suppliers are not nominated, how is the buyer checking their compliance?

Are you planning to increase your production?

Are you running at full capacity right now?

Are your buyers increasing volumes?

ENVIRONMENT AND LEED FACTORY QUESTIONS

Does your company do anything in terms of environmental activities (to improve the environment)?

Do you know about LEED certified building? (Growing Trend in Bangladesh)

Why did you invest in LEED/did not invest in LEED?

LEED often claimed to involve high costs, but many companies do it. Why?

Do you think that investing in environmental (and efficiency) is giving you an advantage? Do you think that investing in LEED (and efficiency) is giving you an advantage?

Where do you learn about LEED?

CSR QUESTIONS

Do you know what CSR means?

What do you do in CSR?

Is CSR in your company structured (namely, is there an annual budget for it or is it carried out informally?)

Do you think that CSR in your company is taking place altruistically beyond being explicit?

Do you think that religion has an impact on the way business is carried, or do you think that now in Bangladesh business and religion are not necessarily intertwined?

Do you believe that doing CSR can bring instrumental advantages? i.e.: retain workers, improving productivity?

Do your buyers ask about what you do for CSR and/or workers?

QUESTIONS ON SHARING

What do you think, factory owners communicate openly about what they do?

Is a communication going on also on strategic issues and innovation (i.e.: machines) beyond the Eid festival and common holidays' agreements?

How and where do you get to know about new information on CSR and LEED? (Other owners, buyers, BGMEA, agent?)

Do you have direct communication with other owners or indirectly through buyer or agents?

Do you communicate with other managers in other companies? If so, what do talk about?

Do you communicate with other factory owners about CSR? And LEED?

How does the BGMEA regulate relationship among owners?

QUESTIONS ON DENSITY

Are there other apparel factories around here?

Are you influenced by them? If so, how?

Is this a rural, semi-industrial or industrial area?

Isn't a rural area more convenient concerning costs?

QUESTIONS ON BEING DIFFER THAN OTHERS

Do you do anything different than other companies in terms of CSR?

Do you do anything different than other companies in terms of environmental activities?

Do you create unrest if you do something different from other factories? (Example of free lunch)

In terms of environmental work, do you create problems with other factories if you have LEED?

Do you create unrest if you do something different from other factories but you are in a rural area? (Corporate density having an effect on CSR)

Do you think that other companies in Bangladesh are doing more for the workers?

COGNITIVE QUESTIONS

How do you think your personal values differ from your organizational values?

Are your values influenced by others in the organization?

QUESTIONS ON LABOR UNIONS AND POLITICS

What do you personally think about labor unions in Bangladesh? Any examples of issues with labor unions in your factory?

Do you allow labor unions?

Do you have problems with political pressures around the factory? (In rural areas for instance)

QUESTIONS ON INVESTMENT

Do you think that automation might create problems with workers? (unemployment?)

Do you think that increase in automation will help?

Are you planning to increase the complexity of the products? How?

Future plans? (i.e.: going for greater automation)

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

Do you have any main problem right now?

What do you think the problem in the Bangladeshi RMG is, if any?

Do you have a problem of productivity or skills of workers?

Do you pay workers fixed or also productivity based?

Did you have cases of unrest with the workers at the time of Rana Plaza?

How the situation changed after Rana Plaza?

Appendix 3 - Email sent to CSR workers in Japan (after first contact)

Dear ABC-san,

This is Enrico Fontana, researcher at the Stockholm School of Economics (Sweden) in the field of CSR and Sustainability, currently in Tokyo.

I am writing you as ABC-san very gently put us in touch. I'd be grateful if we could have an informal 1hr15min interview for my current research on the diffusion of CSR in Japan and CSR managers.

For this purpose, I attach a file with the general questions I would like to ask, in English and Japanese.

Please feel free to let me know any available date next week of the week after, before the 23rd of March. Mornings or evenings are also very much fine.

Thank you very much and looking forward to meeting you,

Best wishes,

Enrico Fontana

Appendix 4 – Template used for interviews in Japan (English/Japanese)

What's your definition of CSR, if any?

貴社における CSR の定義をお聞かせください。

Do you think in Japan there is an understanding of CSR, and if so, how is perceived then?

日本社会では CSR に対する理解があると思いますか。あると考える場合、日本では CSR はどのように理解されていますか。

Do you think final consumers in Japan look for CSR?

日本の消費者は CSR 活動に期待していると思いますか。

Do you consider CSR only as philanthropic or do you see a strategic advantage in it?

CSR を慈善事業ととらえていますか、それとも CSR に戦略的利点もあると考えていますか。

Do you see CSR as a PR activity?

CSR を PR 活動と考えていますか。

Does your company rely on Advertising Agency for your CSR strategy?

貴社は、CSR 戦略について広告代理店に頼っていますか。

My understanding is that Advertising Agencies in Japan have a central role in Strategy Creation for CSR. Do you also talk to them to get knowledge from them?

CSR 戦略策定にあたり、日本では広告代理店が中心的役割を担っていると理解しています。

CSR に関する知識を得る目的で広告代理店と話をすることもありますか。

Do you think that advertisement companies help spread knowledge about CSR to other companies?

広告企業は、他社にも CSR に関する知識を広めていると思いますか。

Where do you get most information about CSR from? What are your sources of information for CSR?

CSR に関する情報は主にどこから得ていますか。情報源はどちらでしょうか。

What's your personal background? (where were you born, where you studied and lived in your youth until today)

あなた個人の経歴についてお聞かせください（出身地や学歴、これまでの若い頃に生活した土地のことなど）

What motivates you in doing the job you do? Does it link with what you always wanted to do? Please explain.

あなたにとって、現在の仕事への意欲の源（モチベーション）は何ですか？現在の仕事は、あなたがずっとやりたかったことですか？説明してください。

What is important value in engaging in CSR?

CSRに従事する上で大切な価値観は何ですか。

What do you think it should be improved in your company when it comes to CSR? If so, please explain.

CSRに関して、貴社で改善すべき点はあるでしょうか。あればお聞かせください。

Where is the CSR department located in the organization chart?

CSR 室・部は組織図ではどこに位置しますか。

Whom is the CSR activity sent mainly to?

CSR 活動は主に誰に向けて発信されていますか。

Do you talk with other (people) in other companies in your industry and do you get influenced by them?

CSR に関して、同業他社の従業員と情報交換をしたり、同業他社から影響を受けたりすることがありますか。

How often do you think does your company talks about CSR with other companies?

貴社では、CSR についてどのくらいの頻度で他社と情報交換を行っていますか。

Do you think companies talk to each other concerning CSR? Please elaborate.

CSR に関する情報交換が企業間で行われていると思いますか。説明してください。

Do you think companies collaborate to each other when it comes to CSR?

CSR に関して、企業同士がお互いに協力することはありますか。

What do companies in Japan share with each other, if any? (AND IN YOUR INDUSTRY?)

日本企業間（および業界内）では CSR についてどのような情報交換を行っていますか。

Are many companies among you your competitors (same industry) doing CSR?

貴社の同業他社の多くは、CSR 活動を行っていますか。

Is your company surrounded by many other companies? And if so, is there any communication with them?

周囲の企業とは CSR について情報交換を行っていますか。

Do you think that high density of companies allows you to get more CSR information? Namely, being surrounded by a lot of companies rather than being isolated.

周囲の企業数が多いことで CSR 情報が得やすくなっていると思いますか。つまり、周囲に他社が存在しないよりも、周囲に多くの企業があった方が情報が得やすいでしょうか。

Do you think is there a mimic effect among organizations for CSR? Let's say one organization engages in CSR, my understanding is that in Japan many organizations will attempt to copy it as they don't want to lose their competitiveness

CSR を行っている企業は互いに模倣し合っていると思いますか。私の理解では、日本ではある一つの組織が CSR に熱心な場合、他の組織も競争力を維持するためにその熱心な組織の取り組みを模倣しようとするのがよくあるのではないかと考えているのですが。

Do you think that companies in Japan are doing a lot of CSR without talking about it? (The problem with implicitness is the difficulty in measurement)

日本では、CSR 活動をたくさん行っているのに、それを公に語っていないケースがよくあるのでしょうか。

Do you think that companies in the countryside are more prone to do CSR without talking about it?

地方の企業は、CSR 活動を行っていても、その活動についてあまり語らない傾向が（都市部の企業と比べて）より強いのでしょうか。

Do you think that in Japan there is a mindset according to which people do not really talk about what they do for others? Please elaborate.

他者のために良い活動をしていても、それをあまり公に語りたがらない考え方が日本にはあると思いますか。説明してください。

Does your company do something different from its competitors concerning CSR?

貴社は、CSR の面で、競合他社と異なる活動を行っていますか。

Are there sectors in Japan that seem to be more responsive toward CSR?

日本で、CSR に対して熱心に取り組んでいる業界は、どのような業界でしょうか。

What's the role of NGOs in Japan? Are they effective in conveying change?

日本の NGO の役割はどのような役割を果たしていますか。変化を起こすのに効果的な存在でしょうか。

Is the government promoting any CSR? Please elaborate.

政府は CSR 活動を後押ししていますか。説明してください。

Do you think you are influenced by other institutional actors in engaging in CSR?

CSR を進めるにあたり、貴社は業界団体、行政機関などの影響を受けていますか。

Is Media putting pressure on companies in Japan? If so, how?

日本企業は、メディアからのプレッシャーを感じていますか。もしそうであれば、どのようなプレッシャーを感じますか。

Do you think that Japanese religious values for society and respect overall could be linked to CSR? Please elaborate.

社会への配慮や他者への敬意といった日本独特の宗教的価値観が、日本での CSR の考え方に影響を与えていると考えますか。説明してください。

CSR is a recent term. Do you think that your company was doing CSR in the past before the birth of CSR as definition?

CSR は比較的新しい言葉です。CSR という言葉が生まれる前も、貴社では CSR に相当する活動を行っていましたか。

Future plans concerning CSR?

CSR に関する将来的な計画をお聞かせください。

The Articles